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# BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.

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AN INQUIRY TOUCHING

PLAYERS, PLAYHOUSES, AND PLAY-WRITERS

IN THE DAYS OF ELIZABETH.

BY

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH, ESQ.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED AN ABSTRACT OF A MS. RESPECTING

TOBIE MATTHEW.

*and the Copy of a letter from.  
Honble Nathl Holmes - St. Louis - U.S.A.  
who has written an able Note on the Subject.*

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## TO HIS READERS AND REVIEWERS.

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By the Scotch Review, which bears the outward semblance of Buchanan, we have been reviled as a "Caviller" and a "Smith." The editor might have reflected that our names and lineaments we inherit, whilst our words and actions are our own.

If his pages were as full of wisdom as ours are free from cavil, the visage without his book, would not be regarded as a mask, whose brains we vainly seek within; and the Review might yet hope to attain a fame coextensive with our name—a name which some wise, and many worthy men, have borne—which, though not unique, is perfectly genteel—and which has, of late years, become such a



tower of strength that, for it, a King of the French was glad to forego his own high-sounding title.

In our little pamphlet (a letter to Lord Ellesmere), it is written—"I purposely abstain from any attempt to compare the writings of the author I am about to mention, with the Plays which are attributed to Shakespeare; not merely because that is a labour too vast to enter upon now, but more particularly because it is essentially the province of the literary student."

We did not, and do not, pretend to be equal to a literary labour. We merely, to use an expression of Bacon's, "have taken upon us to ring a bell, to call other wits together, which is the meanest office." But as, like unready servants, they stared at the bell instead of answering it, we are compelled to do our own errand, and reluctantly make some further entrance into the subject.

Though our faith is sincere, we feel that it wants confirmation, and that we are constitutionally more fit to form one of a congregation of old believers, than to become the preacher of a new creed.

What Bacon says of his book on the *Advancement of Learning*, we may say of our humble production—"In which if I have in any point receded from that which is commonly received, it hath been with a purpose of proceeding *in melius*, and not *in aliud*; a mind of amendment and proficiency, and not of change and difference. For I could not be true and constant to the argument I handle, if I were not willing to go beyond others, but yet not more willing than to have others go beyond me again: which may the better appear by this, that I have propounded my opinions naked and unarmed, not seeking to preoccupate the liberty of men's judgments by confutations."

And we will conclude by quoting his paper on the *Pacification of the Church*, where he says—  
“Knowing in my conscience, whereto God beareth witness, that the things which I shall speak spring out of no vein of popularity, ostentation, desire of novelty, partiality to either side, disposition to intermeddle, or any such leaven: I may conceive hope, that what I want in depth of judgment may be countervailed in simplicity and sincerity of affection.”

THE AUTHOR.

# BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.

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THE AUTHOR has been advised to

## P R E F A C E

the reissue of his Book with the following Letters:

*Mr. Smith to Mr. Hawthorne.*

SIR,

My attention has been called to the following statement in the *Literary Gazette* of the 9th of May.

“ Miss Bacon’s book, a volume of imposing dimensions, is introduced by a preface from Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne, who thus alludes to Mr. Smith’s appropriation of his countrywoman’s labours:—‘ An English writer (in a letter to the Earl of Ellesmere, published within a few months back) has thought it not inconsistent with the fair play upon which his country prides itself, to take to himself this lady’s theory, and favour the public with it as his own original conception, without allusion to the author’s prior claim.’ ”

I beg to assure you that I had never heard the name of Miss Bacon until it was mentioned in the review of my pamphlet in the *Literary Gazette*, Sept. 1856. I had then great difficulty in ascertaining where Miss Bacon had written any thing respecting the Shakespeare Plays. Having done so, and read the article on "William Shakespeare and his Plays," it seemed to me so preposterous for any one to conclude that I had derived my theory from thence, that I did not think the insinuation worthy of notice. The association of your name, however, gives the statement an importance and respectability which the former insinuation in the *Literary Gazette* did not possess, and therefore, although as a "writer" indifferent to fame, as a "man" I cannot allow such a calumny to pass unnoticed.

If it were necessary I could show, that for upwards of twenty years I have held the opinion that Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Plays, but I trust that what I have written will be sufficient to induce you to withdraw the offensive imputation.

Waiting your reply,

I remain Sir, your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH.

*Mr. Hawthorne's Reply.*

SIR,

Liverpool, June 5th, 1857.

In response to your note of 2nd instant, I beg leave to say that I entirely accept your statement as to the originality and early date of your own convictions regarding the authorship of the Shakespeare Plays, and likewise as to your ignorance of Miss Bacon's prior publication on the subject. Of course, my imputation of unfairness or discourtesy on your part falls at once to the ground, and I regret that it was ever made.

My mistake was perhaps a natural one, although unquestionably the treatment of the subject in your *Letter to the Earl of Ellesmere* differs widely from that adopted by Miss Bacon. But as I knew that a rumour of her theory had been widely, though vaguely circulated, for some years past, on both sides of the Atlantic, and also that she had preceded you in publication, it really never occurred to me to doubt that, at least, some wandering seed had alighted in your mind, and germinated into your pamphlet. Under urgent circumstances, I had taken upon myself to write a few prefatory and explanatory words for my countrywoman's book. It was impossible to avoid some allusion to your

pamphlet; and I made such reference as seemed due to an attempt to take an easy advantage of a discovery (allowing it to be such) on which Miss Bacon had staked the labour and happiness of her life, and to develop which she had elaborated a very remarkable work.

I now see that my remarks did you great injustice, and I trust that you will receive this acknowledgment as the only reparation in my power.

Respectfully, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

SIR FRANCIS BACON notes, amongst the impediments of knowledge, that

“He that delivereth knowledge, desireth to deliver it in such form as may be soonest believed, and not as may easiliest be examined.

“He that receiveth knowledge, desireth rather present satisfaction than expectant search, and so rather not to doubt, than not to err.

“Glory maketh the author not to lay open his weakness, and sloth maketh the disciple not to know his strength.”

## CHAPTER II.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHAKESPEARE.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S is indeed a negative history.

Of his life, all that we positively know is the period of his death.

We do not know when he was born, nor when, nor where, he was educated.

We do not know when, or where, he was married, nor when he came to London.

We do not know when, where, or in what order, his plays were written or performed ; nor when he left London.

He died April 23rd, 1616.

## CHAPTER III.

### BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.

TOWARDS the end of the sixteenth, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century, that is, prior to the year 1611, a number of plays, tragedies, comedies, and histories, of various degrees of merit, were produced, of which William Shakespeare was reported to be the author, and which undoubtedly were, in some way, the property of the company of actors of which he was an active member.

No one single manuscript has ever been found to identify Shakespeare as the author of these productions; nor is there, among all the records and traditions handed down to us, any statement that he was ever seen writing or producing a manuscript; nor that he ever claimed as his own any of the excellent, or repudiated (as unworthy of him) any of the worthless, productions presented to the public in his name.

He seems, at no time, to have had any personal or peculiar interest in them ; both during and after his life, they appear to have been the property of the stage, and “ published by the players, doubtless according to their notions of acceptability with the visitants of the theatre.” No Plays bearing Shakespeare’s name, were published between the years 1609 and 1622 ; but in the year 1623 (seven years after Shakespeare’s death) a folio of thirty-six plays was brought out as “ The Workes of Mr. William Shakespeare.”

Of the numerous plays which had appeared and been considered his during his life, thirteen only were admitted into this folio, the rest being entirely ignored ; but twenty-three other plays were added, none of which had ever previously been published.

This volume contains what we now recognise as “ Shakespeare’s Plays ”—works of which it has been said by competent judges, that “ they are, beyond comparison, the greatest productions which man’s intellect, not divinely inspired, has yet achieved.”

That the works now admitted into our editions are all the productions of the same mind, no one at the present day, dreams of disputing ; but if they had descended to us without any tradition as

to the name of the author, and our only information respecting them had been an exact knowledge of the period at which they were written, that we should in that case have attributed them to William Shakespeare, is in the highest degree doubtful.

To consider the probability of these plays having been written by William Shakespeare, and to attack the evidence by which the assertion that they were is supported, is our present object.

Proof that they were written by some other person, we do not yet hope to be able to adduce, but merely such evidence of the probability of this being the case, as may induce some active inquiry in the direction indicated.

To acquaint ourselves with the qualifications which Shakespeare must have possessed to have enabled him to write these plays, we propose to quote the observations of Pope and Coleridge; then to give a brief outline of the lives of Shakespeare and Bacon; and then to note some of the peculiarities of the genius of Bacon.

To begin then with Pope, he says:—"If ever an author deserved the name of an original it was Shakespeare. The poetry of Shakespeare was inspiration indeed; he is not so much an imitator

as an instrument of Nature; and 'tis not so just to say, that he speaks from her as that she speaks through him. His characters are so much Nature herself, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. The power over our passions was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances; yet all along, there is no labour, no pains to raise them, no preparation to guide our guess to the effect, or to be perceived to lead towards it; but the heart swells, and the tears burst out just at the proper places. We are surprised the moment we weep, and yet, upon reflection, find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.\* The passions directly opposite to these are no less at his command. Nor does he only excel in the passions: in the coolness of reflection and reasoning he is full as admirable. His sentiments are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject; but by a talent very peculiar, something between penetration and felicity, he hits

\* Of Bacon, Jonson says in his *Discoveries*—"His language (when he could spare or pass by a jest) was nobly censorious. He commanded when he spoke, and had his judges, angry and pleased, at his devotion. No man had their affections more in his power.

upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing from a man of no education or experience in those great and public scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts. So that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion—that the philosopher and even the man of the world may be born, as well as the poet.”

With regard to his learning, Pope says:—“There is certainly a vast difference between learning and languages. How far he was ignorant of the latter I cannot determine; but ’tis plain he had much reading, at least, if they will not call it learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has knowledge, whether he has it from one language or another. Nothing is more evident than that he had a taste of natural history, mechanics, ancient and modern history, poetical learning, and mythology. We find him very knowing in the customs, rites, and manners of antiquity. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar*, not only the spirit but manners of the Romans are exactly drawn; and still a nicer distinction is shown between the manners of the Romans in the



time of the former and of the latter. The manners of other nations in general, the Egyptians, Venetians, French, &c., are drawn with equal propriety. Whatever object of nature or branch of science he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive knowledge: his descriptions are still exact, all his metaphors appropriated, and remarkably drawn from the true nature and inherent qualities of each subject. When he treats of ethics or politics, we may constantly observe a wonderful justness of distinction, as well as extent of comprehension. No one is more a master of the poetical story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it. Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shown more learning this way than Shakespeare. We have translations from Ovid, published in his name, among those poems which pass for his. He appears also to have been conversant in Plautus, from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays; he follows the Greek authors, and particularly Dares Phrygius, in another (although I will not pretend to say in what language he read them). The modern Italian writers of novels he was manifestly acquainted with; and we may conclude him to be no less conversant with the

ancients of his own country, from the use he has made of Chaucer in *Troilus and Cressida*, and in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, if that play be his, as there goes a tradition it was."

We will now give a short extract from Coleridge:—

"O, when I think of the inexhaustible mine of virgin wealth in our Shakespeare; that I have been almost daily reading him since I was ten years old; that the thirty intervening years have been unintermittingly and not fruitlessly employed in the study of the Greek, Latin, English, Italian, Spanish, and German *belle lettrists*—the last fifteen years, in addition, still more intensely, in the analysis of the laws of life and reason, as they exist in man; and that upon every step I have made forward—in taste, in acquisition of facts from history or my own observation—in knowledge of the different laws of being and their apparent exceptions from accidental collision of disturbing forces—that, at every new accession of information, after every successful exercise of meditation, and every fresh presentation of experience—I have unfailingly discovered a proportionate increase of wisdom and intuition in Shakespeare."

We propose now to consider the history—the

brief and admitted history of the man, to whom the genius of Pope and the intellect of Coleridge offer this homage.

There is reason to suppose that Shakespeare was born in the year 1564. His father was a humble tradesman at Stratford-upon-Avon, who at one time had so much improved his position as to attain to the office of bailiff of the borough. He afterwards, however, became very much reduced in circumstances. Any education that William Shakespeare received, he most probably obtained at the free school at Stratford; that it was very superficial, is now generally admitted. At about the age of eighteen, he contracted or was inveigled into a marriage with a woman eight years older than himself; and about the year 1586, when he was twenty-two years old, he left his wife and family at Stratford, and came to London; and very shortly afterwards was actively engaged in the management of a theatre, and continued to be so until about the year 1611, when, having made a considerable fortune, he retired to Stratford-upon-Avon, to enjoy the fruits of his active industry, and died there in 1616.

Francis Bacon was born in 1561. His father was the famous Sir Nicholas, so many years Lord

Keeper. His mother was a very learned woman. Francis Bacon was carefully brought up at home until he was twelve years old. He then went to Cambridge, and had completed his studies by the time he was sixteen years old.

In 1576 he went abroad; and upon the death of his father in 1579, returned to England; and, finding himself in straitened circumstances, unwillingly took to the study of the law, and became a member of Gray's Inn.

He seems to have had but little practice as a barrister, and to have vainly solicited for Government employment, and been in embarrassed circumstances during the whole of Queen Elizabeth's reign. With the accession of James in 1603, his prospects improved; he was appointed Solicitor-General in 1607, and rapidly rose, until eventually he became Lord Chancellor, from which office he was removed, with disgrace, in 1621, and died in 1626.

The object in stating these biographies is, to show how identical were the periods in which these two men flourished. If Shakespeare wrote these plays, he most probably did so between the years 1586 and 1611; if Bacon wrote them, he most probably did so between the years 1580 and 1607.

Having stated what Pope and Coleridge predicate of the qualifications of the author of these plays, we should hardly expect to recognise in a person, born and brought up as we have represented Shakespeare to have been, the probable possessor of such vast and varied acquirements.

## CHAPTER IV.

### WIT AND POETIC FACULTY OF BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.

IN the following extracts from that able essayist Mr. Macaulay, anatomising and describing the genius and character of Bacon, the reader will recognise peculiarities bearing a strong affinity to those which characterise these plays. The extent and variety of Bacon's knowledge are so well known and universally admitted, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon that point, though the beautiful language and imagery with which Mr. Macaulay has illustrated it, might well excuse a quotation.

Of his wit he says :—" In wit, if by wit be meant the power of perceiving analogies between things which appear to have nothing in common, he never had an equal; not even Cowley—not even the author of *Hudibras*. Indeed he possessed this faculty, or rather it possessed him, to a morbid degree.

When he abandoned himself to it without reserve, the feats which he performed were not only admirable, but portentous and almost shocking. On those occasions we marvel at him as clowns on a fair-day marvel at a juggler, and can hardly help thinking the devil must be in him. These, however, were feats in which his ingenuity now and then wandered, with scarcely any other object than to astonish and amuse. But it occasionally happened, that when he was engaged in grave and profound investigations, his wit obtained the mastery over all his other faculties, and led him into absurdities, into which no dull man could possibly have fallen." After giving several instances, Mr. Macaulay proceeds thus:—"The truth is, his mind was wonderfully quick in perceiving analogies of all sorts. But, like several eminent men whom we could name, both living and dead, he sometimes appeared strangely deficient in the power of distinguishing rational from fanciful analogies—analogies which are arguments, from analogies which are mere illustrations."

After showing how this want of discrimination has led to many strange political speculations, Mr. Macaulay proceeds:—

"It is curious that Bacon has mentioned this



very kind of delusion among the *idola specus*, and has mentioned it in language which we are inclined to think, shows that he knew himself to be subject to it. It is the vice, he tells us, of subtle minds to attach too much importance to slight distinctions ; it is the vice, on the other hand, of high and discursive intellects to attach too much importance to slight resemblances ; and he adds, that when this last propensity is indulged to excess, it leads men to catch at shadows instead of substances. Yet we cannot wish that Bacon's wit had been less luxuriant ; for, to say nothing of the pleasure it affords, it was in the vast majority of cases employed for the purpose of making obscure truth plain, of making repulsive truth attractive, of fixing in the mind for ever, truth which might otherwise have left but a transient impression."

To show the identity of this wit with that exhibited in the plays attributed to Shakespeare, we here insert the observations of M. Guizot upon Shakespeare\* :—

"The poet's (Shakespeare's) gaze embraced an immense field, and his imagination, traversing it with marvellous rapidity, perceived a thousand distant and singular relations between the objects

\* Guizot's *Shakespeare and his Times*, page 115.

which met his view, and passed from one to another by a multitude of abrupt and curious transitions, which it afterwards imposed upon both the personages of the drama and the spectators. Hence arose the true and great fault of Shakespeare, the only one which originated in himself, and which is sometimes perceptible, even in his finest compositions, and that is a defective appearance of laborious research, which is occasioned, on the contrary, by the absence of labour. Accustomed by the tastes of his age, frequently to connect ideas and expressions by their most distant relations, he contracted the habit of that learned subtlety which perceives and assimilates everything, and leaves no point of resemblance unnoticed."

Of Bacon's poetical faculty, Mr. Macaulay observes :—

"The poetical faculty was powerful in Bacon's mind, but not, like his wit, so powerful as occasionally to usurp the place of his reason, and to tyrannise over the whole man. No imagination was ever at once so strong and so thoroughly subjugated. It never stirred but at a signal from good sense ; it stopped at the first check of good sense. Yet, though disciplined to such obedience, it gave noble proofs of its vigour ; in truth, much

of Bacon's life was passed in a visionary world. He loved to picture to himself the world as it would be, when his philosophy should, in his own noble phrase, 'have enlarged the bounds of human empire.'

"We might refer to many instances, but we will content ourselves with the strongest—the description of the house of Solomon in the *New Atlantis*. By most of Bacon's contemporaries, and by some people of our time, this remarkable passage would, we doubt not, be considered as an ingenious rodomontade, a counterpart of the adventures of Sinbad or Baron Munchausen. The truth is, that there is not to be found in any human composition, a passage more eminently distinguished by profound and serene wisdom. The boldness and originality of the fiction are far less wonderful than the nice discernment which carefully excluded from that long list of prodigies, everything that can be proved to lie beyond the mighty magic of induction and of time. Already some parts, and not the least startling parts, of this glorious prophecy have been accomplished, even according to the letter; and the whole, construed according to the spirit, is daily accomplishing all around us."

Now, this is precisely that which we find in

the plays under our consideration. As Schlegel observes:—"This Prometheus not merely forms men—he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits, calls up the midnight ghost, exhibits before us the witches with their unhallowed rites, peoples the air with sportive fairies and sylphs; and these beings, though existing only in the imagination, nevertheless possess such truth and consistency, that, even with such misshapen abortions as Caliban, he extorts the assenting conviction, *that, were there such beings, they would so conduct themselves.* In a word, as he carries a bold and pregnant fancy into the kingdom of nature, on the other hand, he carries nature into the regions of fancy, which lie beyond the confines of reality. We are lost in astonishment at the close intimacy he brings us into with the extraordinary, the wonderful, and the unheard of."

Thus we see that Bacon and Shakespeare both flourished at the same time, and might, either of them, have written these works, as far as dates are concerned, and that Bacon not only had the requisite learning and experience, but also that his wit and poetic faculty were exactly of that peculiar character which we find exhibited in these plays.

## CHAPTER V.

### BACON'S POWERS OF MIND, IN YOUTH AND ADVANCED YEARS.

ONE of the most remarkable circumstances, says Macaulay, in the history of Bacon's mind, is the order in which its powers expanded themselves. With him the fruit came first, and remained till the last ; the blossoms did not appear till late. In general, the development of the fancy is to the development of the judgment, what the growth of a girl is to the growth of a boy. The fancy attains at an early period to the perfection of its beauty, its power, and its fruitfulness ; and as it is first to ripen, it is also first to fade. It has generally lost something of its bloom and freshness before the sterner qualities have reached maturity, and is commonly withered and barren, whilst those faculties still retain all their enegies. It rarely happens that the fancy and the judgment grow together. It happens still more rarely, that the judgment grows faster than the fancy ; this seems, however, to have been the case with Bacon. His boyhood

and youth seem to have been singularly sedate. His gigantic scheme of philosophical reform, is said by some writers, to have been planned before he was fifteen, and was undoubtedly planned while he was still young. He observed as vigilantly, meditated as deeply, and judged as temperately, when he gave his first work to the world, as at the close of his long career.

But in eloquence, in sweetness and variety of expression, and in richness of illustration, his later writings are far superior to those of his youth. We will give very short specimens of Bacon's two styles. In 1597, he wrote thus :—" Crafty men condemn studies ; simple men admire them ; and wise men use them : for they teach not their own use, that is a wisdom without them, and won by observation. Read not to contradict, nor to believe, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing a correct man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need of a great memory ; if he confer little, have present wit ; and if he read little, have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make wise men ; poets, witty ; mathematicians, subtle ;

natural philosophy, deep ; morals, grave ; logic and rhetoric, able to contend.”

The following passage, first published in 1625, will show the extent of the change :—

“Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament ; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer evidence of God’s favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David’s harp, you will hear as many hearse-like airs as carols ; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job, than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distates, and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work on a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground. Judge therefore of the pleasures of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed ; for prosperity doth best discover vice, and adversity doth best discover virtue.”

The phenomenon which Mr. Macaulay remarks upon is so peculiar, that it is clear that he can hardly believe it himself. This seems, says he, to



have been the case with Bacon. That the fruit should come first and remain till the last, and the blossom not appear till late, is so contrary to nature, that we may well pause and inquire whether this was really the case, or did but seem to be so.

Upon the orange-tree we may observe the bud, the blossom, and the fruit in every stage of ripeness, all exhibited in one plant at the same time, although each individually has, in its production, observed the exact order prescribed by nature. But when the plant is in this state, what hinders that the gardener should not gather fruit and flower at the same time, and appropriate each to its several use? And how diverse and remote may their several uses be!

The stentorian orator in the City Forum, who, restoring his voice with the luscious fruit, continues his harangue to the applauding multitude, little reflects, that the delicate blossom which grew by its side, and was gathered at the same time, decorates the fair brow of the fainting bride in the far-off village church. Nature is always true to herself: her order was not reversed in the case of Bacon. The bud, the blossom, the flower, and the fruit, each came in its proper and accustomed order, and grew and flourished long together. But what if, like a prudent husbandman, he sent each



to its appropriate market—the flowers of his fancy, to the wits and the players; the fruits of his judgment, to the sages and statesmen of his day? This peculiarity, remarked upon by Mr. Macaulay, tends greatly to confirm the probability of the theory we are advocating. The theatre seems to have been a necessity of Bacon's spiritual existence, as affording a safety-valve by which he was able to let off the superfluous wit, which would otherwise, doubtless, have exploded in a manner totally destructive to the reputation, which at that early period of his life he was endeavouring to build up.

We attribute, then, the gravity of Bacon's early style, to the nature of his position and the character of the age. The times of Elizabeth and James are often mentioned together, as though they were identical, yet few proximate periods are more dissimilar. The gloomy fanaticism of the Commonwealth was scarcely more opposed to the gay licentiousness of the Restoration, than the wisdom and discretion of the days of Elizabeth to the pedantry and folly of those of James.

In the former, learned men studied only how best to employ their learning; in the latter, men equally learned, studied only how best to display it. Events were so stirring in the days of Eliza-

beth, that to those engaged in the business of the state, feigned catastrophes might well seem impertinent, and poetry be for the time disregarded. The commoner sort of people doubtless had a keen appreciation of it, and wise rulers have ever paid some attention to popular feeling; hence the *toleration* of professed actors and a public playhouse.

But the writing of plays, as the acting of them, was considered by the better sort "a toy," which might be practised as a pastime and recreation, but which conferred neither honour nor distinction upon the maker or performer.

In that age, as Coleridge truly observes, the law, the church, and the state, engrossed all honour and respectability; a degree of disgrace—*levior quædam infamiae macula*—was attached to the publication of poetry, and even to have sported with the muse as a private relaxation, was supposed to be, a venial fault indeed, but something beneath the gravity of a wise man. The professed writers for the stage in the days of Elizabeth, were all men of talent, most of them members of the universities, and some clergymen; but, with hardly an exception, they were men of licentious lives, depraved habits, and ruined characters—pests of society, shunned by all the respectable portion of the community.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE main evidence in favour of Shakespeare having been the author of these plays, is—

The fact of his name always having been attached to and associated with them.

Mere's mention of him in *Wit's Commonwealth*.

Basse's elegy the only one supposed to have been written near the time of his decease.

The passage in the *Return from Parnassus*.

Ben Jonson's testimony in his *Discoveries*, and his verses published with the folio of 1623.

All the other testimonies are subsequent to the publication of the collection of plays, and have reference to them, and not to the individual man, or else are worthless traditions, which, whether true or false, would serve as incidents to eke out a life or biography, but do nothing towards elucidating the authorship of the plays. Hallam observes, "I laud the labours of Mr. Collier, Mr. Hunter, and other

collectors of such crumbs, though I am not sure that we should not venerate Shakespeare as much if they had left him undisturbed in his obscurity. To be told that he played a trick to a brother player in a licentious amour, or that he died of a drunken frolic, as a stupid vicar of Stratford recounts (long after the time) in his diary, does not exactly inform us of the man who wrote *Lear*. If there was a Shakespeare of earth (as I suspect), there was also one of heaven; and it is of him we desire to know something.”—1842.

In fact, every accession of information we obtain respecting the man Shakespeare, renders it more and more difficult to detect in him the poet.

The evidence of Ben Jonson is so much more direct than any to be derived from any other source, that, as we intend to impugn it, we do not esteem it necessary to grapple with the others.

In his *Discoveries* Jonson writes:—“I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writings (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, Would he had blotted a thousand! which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend

their friend by, wherein he most faulted, and to justify my own candour; for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was (indeed) honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary that he should be stopped: *Sufflammandus erat*, as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so to. Many times he fell into those things could not escape laughter: as when he said, in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong,' he replied, 'Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause;' and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned."

The edition of Jonson's works, published in 1616, —a rare folio—does not contain the *Discoveries*: they were first published in 1640, three years after Jonson's death. The *Discoveries* are detached thoughts and reflections, which appear to have been dotted down or entered in a commonplace book, without much regard to order, sequence, or priority. It is hardly possible to imagine any man,

who had read the collected plays of Shakespeare, writing such a description of him as herein contained, or, in the face of such evidence misquoting a passage from one of these plays. The probability is, that Jonson wrote this passage prior to 1623, very likely soon after Shakespeare's death, and before he became so intimately acquainted with these plays, as we shall presently endeavour to show that he ultimately was. Pope surmises that his remark on *Julius Cæsar* was made "upon no better credit than some blunder of an actor in speaking the verse." This doubtless was the fact; and Jonson, having noted it down, and neglected to destroy or expunge it, his executors found it after his death, and published it with his other writings, thus perpetuating a blunder which reflects ridicule, not upon Shakespeare, but upon Jonson himself. As we cannot believe that Jonson retained this opinion after the publication of the folio, or would have wished such a comment on *Julius Cæsar* to have been published, so we may fairly infer that his judgment with regard to Shakespeare would in other respects also have been greatly changed.

This paragraph, therefore, has not the weight and importance which at first sight it would seem to possess.



Shakespeare's fame—the fame which he now and ever will enjoy—is based upon the folio of 1623. At its publication, it was ushered into the world accompanied by verses written by Ben Jonson, and Malone satisfactorily shows that the dedication and preface, ascribed to Heminge and Condell, were also most likely from his pen; in fact, it probably would not be too much to say, that Ben Jonson was the Editor of the Folio of 1623.

Now, at this time Ben Jonson was at the zenith of his fame, and on terms of intimacy with Lord Bacon, and perhaps the most competent living judge and discriminator of the works of his various contemporaries. If then the lines which he wrote, and which accompany this volume, celebrate and identify the William Shakespeare who died in 1616 as the author of the plays therein written, that evidence ought to be conclusive. The lines are in many parts incomprehensible, and throughout exhibit a mysterious vagueness quite at variance with the general character of Ben Jonson's laudatory verses. The critic who would translate them into plain prose, would not be ill employed; but, as Bacon observes, with commentators, "it is ever usual to blanche the obscure places and discourse upon the plain."

## TO THE READER.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
 It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;  
 Wherein the graver had a strife  
 with Nature, to out-doo the life:  
 O, could he but have drawn his wit  
 As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
 His face; the Print would then surpasse  
 All, that was ever writ in brasse.  
 But, since he cannot, Reader, looke  
 Not on his Picture, but his Booke. B. I.

*To the Memory of my beloved, the Author, MR. WILLIAM  
 SHAKESPEARE: and what he hath left us.*

To draw no envy (Shakespeare) on thy name,  
 Am I thus ample to thy Booke, and Fame:  
 While I confesse thy writings to be such,  
 As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much.  
 'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these wayes  
 Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise:  
 For seeliest Ignorance on these may light,  
 Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;  
 Or blinde Affection, which doth ne're advance  
 The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance;  
 Or crafty Malice, might pretend this praise,  
 And thinke to ruine, where it seem'd to raise.  
 These are, as some infamous Baud, or Whore,  
 Should praise a Matron. What could hurt her more?  
 But thou art prooffe against them, and indeed  
 Above th' ill fortune of them, or the need.  
 I, therefore will begin. Soule of the Age!  
 The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!  
 My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by  
 Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye  
 A little further, to make thee a roome:  
 Thou art a Monument, without a Tombe,  
 And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,



And we have wits to read, and praise to give.  
That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses ;  
I meane with great, but disproportion'd Muses :  
For, if I thought my judgement were of yeeres,  
I should commit thee surely with thy peeres,  
And tell, how farre thou didst our Lily out-shine,  
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.  
And though thou hadst small Latine, and lesse Greeke,  
From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke  
For names ; but call forth thund'ring Æschilus,  
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,  
Paccuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,  
To life againe, to heare thy Buskin tread,  
And shake a Stage : Or, when thy Sockes were on,  
Leave thee alone, for the comparison  
Of all, that insolent Greece, or haughtie Rome  
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.  
Triumph, my Britaine, thou hast one to showe,  
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not of an age, but for all time !  
And all the Muses still were in their prime,  
When like Apollo he came forth to warme  
Our eares, or like a Mercury to charme !  
Nature her selfe was proud of his designes,  
And joy'd to weare the dressing of his lines !  
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,  
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.  
The merry Greeke, tart Aristophanes,  
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please ;  
But antiquated, and deserted lye  
As they were not of Nature's family.  
Yet must I not give Nature all : Thy Art,  
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.  
For though the Poet's matter, Nature be,  
His Art doth give the fashion. And, that he,  
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,  
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat

Upon the Muses' anvil: turne the same,  
 (And himselfe with it) that he thinkes to frame;  
 Or for the lawrell, he may gaine a scorne,  
 For a good Poet's made, as well as borne.  
 And such wert thou. Looke how the father's face  
 Lives in his issue, even so the race  
 Of Shakespeare's minde, and manners brightly shines  
 In his well-turned, and true-filed lines:  
 In each of which, he seems to shake a Lance,  
 As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance.  
 Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were  
 To see thee in our waters yet appeare,  
 And make those flights upon the bankes of Thames,  
 That so did take Eliza, and our James!  
 But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere  
 Advanc'd, and made a Constellation there!  
 Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets, and with rage,  
 Or influence, chide or cheere the drooping Stage;  
 Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night  
 And despaire's day, but for thy Volume's light.

BEN IONSON.

These lines appear to be capable of a double meaning. We do not at all mean to contend that they in any way prove that Bacon was the author of these plays, but only that they do not afford that direct evidence in favour of Shakespeare which might be expected; and that some of the expressions are clearly susceptible of being applied to Bacon.

Not to dilate upon the exordium, the early lines of which appear to express something of an excuse for praising the book rather than the individual,

we proceed at once to the invocation. That we may not be charged with anything like special pleading, or a desire to deceive, we admit that the lines and phrases selected will be such as seem best to favour the theory we are advocating.

Soul of the age !  
Th' applause, delight ! the wonder of our age,  
My Shakespeare—rise !

“Soul of the age” seems a term more applicable to Bacon than to Shakespeare; whilst the possessive pronoun “my,” added to Shakespeare, may serve to render his invocation applicable to either the one or the other.

The lines,

Thou art a monument without a tomb,  
And art alive still while thy book doth live,  
And we have wits to read, and praise to give,

seem much more applicable to a living than to a deceased person.

And though thou hast small Latin and less Greek,  
From thence to honour thee I would not seek  
For names.

The first of these lines has been wrested in every possible way, to make it applicable to William Shakespeare, without success; and though at first sight it might seem even less applicable to Bacon,

upon investigation the reverse will be found to be the case.

There is reason to suppose that Bacon was not greatly proficient in the Greek language, but that he was well acquainted with Latin there can be no doubt: he probably could speak it with fluency. But in that age, when, as has been well observed, Latin occupied the place which French now occupies, and every one who was educated at all, must, of necessity, have been classically educated, a man might have a very considerable knowledge of Latin and Greek, and yet be pronounced by so finished and critical a scholar as Ben Jonson undoubtedly was, to have "small Latin and less Greek." The observation, and the mode of introducing it in the midst of a panygeric, are highly characteristic of Jonson; and it is just such a hit as he would delight to bestow upon a living great man, whom he considered his inferior in scholarship. That there is some truth in it, is confirmed by contemporary statements; for in Bacon's life in the *Biographia Britannica*, there is this note:—"Amelot, in his *Memoires Historiques*, tom. i. page 361, has asserted, upon the pretended authority of Casaubon, that Lord Bacon did not understand Latin. This is as evident a falsehood as

any which is to be met with in Amelot's whole book. If there be any truth in Casaubon having said that Bacon did not understand Latin, he must have meant that *he did not understand it critically*, as he himself did." This admission is all that we require. We do not undertake to prove that Bacon had "small Latin and less Greek," but simply to suggest, that these lines might possibly refer to him. Shaw, in his *Outlines of General Literature*, says of Bacon:—"The Latin style is in the highest degree, concise, vigorous, and accurate, though by no means free from obscurity, and, of course, in no way to be considered as a model of pure Latinity." Macaulay and others speak of Bacon's "crampt Latin."

Or when thy socks were on,  
Leave thee alone for the comparison  
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome  
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

Ben Jonson, in his *Discoveries*, uses these very words in reference to Bacon. Writing of the able men of his day, he says:—"Sir Henry Saville, grave and truly lettered; Sir Edwin Sandys, excellent in both; Lord Egerton, a grave and great orator, and best when he was provoked. But his learned and able (but unfortunate) successor, is he that hath filled up all numbers, and performed that

in our tongue, which may be compared and preferred to insolent Greece and haughty Rome.”

Or for the laurel, he may gain a scorn,  
For a good poet's made, as well as born ;  
And such wert thou.

These lines are little applicable to Shakespeare, whilst they are an exact description of Bacon. Had he never written a line of verse, he would still have been considered a poet, by all who were acquainted with his writings. His poetry is essentially that of a made, not a born poet. It is not that poetry which is excited by the contemplation of external objects ; but having drank deep of wisdom and knowledge, the rich flood bursts forth from his full heart and teeming intellect, carrying us along with it in its torrent of passion, whilst the light spray of its exuberant fancy dances around and glitters and gleams upon every object with which it comes in contact. Such too is his wit : it is not the result of animal spirits : no amount of exhilaration would produce it ; there is nothing rollicking about it, except when he portrays a character so exceptional as Mercutio. Sickness or distress could not damp or destroy it. He had the materials within him ; and his active fancy, roving through the rich storehouse, loaded herself with

its treasures, playfully bringing into juxtaposition things apparently remote and discordant.

Look how the father's face  
Lives in his issue ; even so the race  
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners richly shines  
In his well-turned and true-filed lines.

In illustration of these lines, we should be glad to find that the lineaments of Francis Bacon's face resembled those of Sir Nicholas ; his form certainly did not. That the mind and manners of the courtly Bacon shine in his "well-turned and true-filed lines," no one will for a moment deny ; it has been observed, there is "an odour of the court in his meanest characters." It is the absence of all uproariousness, and that tone of high breeding which pervades them, which renders it impossible to believe that Shakespeare, even had he been all that his fondest admirers represent him, could possibly have produced these plays. It is sympathy with this which constitutes *the excellence* in reading or performing these plays. We may often hear the words delivered with great correctness of tone and emphasis, so that it would be impossible to say that they were badly delivered ; yet we feel that there is just that deficiency, which, when we hear Holy Scripture read under similar circumstances, we characterise as want of devotion.



That Jonson could pen hearty and direct praise, is evidenced by the following lines, which we apprehend cannot by any ingenuity be construed to allude to any other person. They are addressed

TO MR. EDWARD ALLEN.

If Rome so great, and in her wisest age,  
Fear'd not to boast the glories of her stage;  
As skilful Roscius, and grave Æsop, men  
Yet crown'd with honours, as with riches then;  
Who had no less a trumpet of their name  
Than Cicero, whose every breath was fame:  
How can so great example die in me?  
That, Allen, I should pause to publish thee;  
Who both their graces in thyself hast more  
Outstript, than they did all that went before,  
And present worth in all dost so contract  
As others speak, but only thou dost act.  
Wear this renown—'tis just that who did give  
So many poets life, by one should live.

There is a curious circumstance in connection with the effigies or portrait published with the folio of 1623. As no picture of Shakespeare was then in existence, and as it does not resemble the Stratford Monument, it must be considered an original production—conceived, it may be, in the same spirit as Ben Jonson's Verses; so that the lines of the engraver, and of the poet, alike shadow forth Bacon, or Shakespeare, indifferently. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that Bacon's



portrait, taken when he was eighteen years of age, an engraving of which is in Basil Montagu's edition of his works, is similar in form to the portrait of Shakespeare published with the folio of 1623. It is simply a head in an oval, and has this motto round the margin :—

*Si tabula daretur digna animum mallem ;*

which may well be rendered in the words applied to Shakespeare's portrait :—

O could he but have drawn his wit  
As well in brass, as he hath hit  
His face, the print would then surpass  
All that was ever writ in brass.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PARALLEL PASSAGES, AND PECULIAR PHRASES, FROM BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.

POETRY and prose, plays and philosophical writings, are generally considered so opposed and antagonistic, that it seems unreasonable to expect to find in them similarity of ideas or coincidences of expression ; yet these are to be found in Bacon and Shakespeare.

Thus, in the *Advancement of Learning* :—

Poetry is nothing else but feigned history.

*Twelfth Night*, act i. sc. 2 :—

*Viola*. 'Tis poetical.

*Olivia*. It is the more likely to be feigned.

*As You Like It*, act iii. sc. 7 :—

The truest poetry is the most feigning.

*Essay on Building :—*

He that builds a fair house upon an ill seat committeth himself to prison ; nor do I reckon that an ill seat only, where the air is unwholesome, but likewise where it is unequal.

*Macbeth, act i. sc. 6 :—*

This castle hath a pleasant seat—the air  
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself  
Unto our gentle senses.

---

*Advancement of Learning :—*

Behaviour seemeth to me a garment of the mind, and to have the conditions of a garment. For it ought to be made in fashion, it ought not to be too curious.

*Hamlet, act i. sc. 3 :—*

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not exprest in fancy.

---

*Advancement of Learning :*

Is not the opinion of Aristotle worthy to be regarded, where he saith, that young men are not fit auditors of *moral* philosophy, because they are not settled from the boiling heat of their affections, nor attempered by time and experience.

*Troilus and Cressida, act ii. sc. 3 :—*

Not much  
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought  
Unfit to hear *moral* philosophy.

Aristotle quoted incorrectly in both these passages. He says *political*, not *moral* philosophy.

*Advancement of Learning :—*

In the third place I set down reputation, because of the peremptory tides and currents it hath, which, if they be not taken in due time, are seldom recovered, it being extreme hard to play an after-game of reputation.

*Julius Cæsar, act iv. sc. 3 :—*

There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune :  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

---

*Apophthegms :—*

Bacon relates that a fellow named Hog importuned Sir Nicholas to save his life on account of the kindred between Hog and Bacon.

“Ay, but,” replied the judge, “you and I cannot be kindred except you be hanged: for Hog is not Bacon until it be well hanged.”

*Merry Wives of Windsor, act iv. sc. 1 :—*

*Evans.* Hung—Hang—Hog.

*D. Quickly.* Hang Hog—is the Latin for Bacon.

---

*On Cunning :—*

For there be many wise men that have secret hearts, but transparent countenances.

*Henry IV. part 2, act i. sc. 1 :—*

And the whiteness in thy cheek,  
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.

*Interpretation of Nature :—*

Yet evermore it must be remembered, that the least part of knowledge passed to man by this so large a charter from God—must be subject to that use for which God hath granted it, which is the benefit and relief of the state and society of man.

*Measure for Measure, act i. sc. 2 :—*

Nature never lends  
The smallest scruple of her excellence;  
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines  
Herself the glory of a creditor,  
Both use and thanks.

---

Note the peculiar use of the words, *knee* and *chew*.

*Life of Henry VII. :—*

As his victory gave him the knee, so his purposed marriage with the Lady Elizabeth gave him the heart, so that both knee and heart did truly bow before him.

*Richard II.* Show heaven the humbled heart and not the knee.

*Hamlet.* And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee.

*On Studies :—*

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few chewed and digested.

*Henry V. act ii. sc. 2.*

How shall we stretch our eyes,  
When capital crimes, chewed, swallowed, and digested,  
Appear before us.

*Letter to James I. :—*

And therefore, in conclusion, he wished him not to shut the gate of your Majestie's mercy against himself, by being obdurate any longer.

*Henry, act iii. sc. 3 :—*

The gates of mercy shall be all shut up.

*Henry VI. :—*

Open the gate of mercy, gracious Lord.

---

Trench says, *Essays* was a new word in Bacon's time, and his use of it quite novel. Bacon thus writes of his *Essays* :—

Which I have called *Essays*. The word is late, though the thing is ancient.

Mrs. Clark, in her *Concordance*, reports the word *Essays* as occurring twice in Shakespeare, which indeed is true of Knight's Shakespeare ; but it only occurs once in the folio of 1623, in relation to Edgar's letter to Edmund, who says :—

I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my nature.

---

*On Masques :—*

It is better they should be graced with elegance, than *daubed* with cost.

*Lear, act iv. sc. 1 :—*

*Edgar.* Poor Tom's a-cold ; I cannot *daub* it further.

*Henry VII. :—*

All was inned at last into the King's barn.

*All's Well that Ends Well*, act i. sc. 3 :—

He that ears my land, spares my team,  
And gives me leave to inn my crop.

---

*Of Adversity :—*

It is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground.

*Henry IV.* act i. sc. 2 :—

Bright metals on a sullen ground  
Will show more goodly, and attract more eyes,  
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.

---

*Natural History :—*

The flesh shrinketh, but the bone resisteth, whereby the cold becometh more *eager*.

*Hamlet*, act i. sc. 4 :—

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly—it is very cold;  
*Hor.* It is a nipping and an *eager* air.

---

We tried an experiment, but it sorted not.

Johnson quotes this observation of Bacon's, to illustrate a line in *Taming of the Shrew*, act iv. sc. 7 :—

And all my pains is sorted to no proof.

*New Atlantis :—*

Never heard of any the least *inkling* or glimpse of this island.

*Coriolanus*, act i. sc. 1 :—

They have had *inkling*, this fortnight, what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds.

*Henry VIII.* act ii. sc. 1 :—

Yet I can give you *inkling*  
Of an ensuing evil.

---

*Life of Henry VII.* :—

He was a comely personage, a little above *just* stature, well and straight limbed, but slender.

*2 Henry IV.* act iv. sc. 1 :—

The prince is here at hand, pleaseth your lordships  
To meet his grace, *just* distance 'tween our armies.

---

*Natural Hist.* cent. ii. 136 :—

For the sound will be greater or lesser, as the barrel is more empty or more full.

*Lear*, act i :—

Nor are those empty hearted, whose low sound  
Reverbs no hollowness.

---

*Advancement of Learning* :—

Not unlike to that which amongst the Romans, was expressed in the familiar or household terms of *Promus* and *Conduis*.

*Henry V.* act iv. sc. 3 :—

Familiar in their mouths as household words.



*Natural Hist.* cent. i. 98 :—

Like prospectives, which show things inwards when they are but paintings.

*Richard II.* act ii. sc. 2 :—

Like perspectives, which rightly gazed upon  
Show nothing but confusion—ey'd awry,  
Distinguish form.—

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PLAYERS.

STRYPE, in his edition of Stow published in the year 1720, says :—" Acting plays for the diversion and entertainment of the court, the gentry, and any others, is become a calling whereby many get their living. How lawfully, is another question. Players in former times were retainers, and none had the privilege to act plays but such. So, in Queen Elizabeth's time, many of the great nobility had tenants and retainers, who were players, and went about getting their livelihood that way.

"The Lord Admiral had players, and so had the Lord Strange, that played within the city of London. It was not unusual then, upon any gentleman's complaint of them, for abuses or undecent reflections practised in their plays, to have them put down. Thus, once the Lord Treasurer signified

to the Lord Mayor Hart, to have these players of the Lord Admiral and Lord Strange prohibited, at least for some time, because one Mr. Tilney had utterly, for some reason, disliked them. Whereupon the Mayor sent for both companies, and gave them a strict charge, and required them in the Queen's name, to forbear playing for some time, till further order might be given for their allowance.

“The Lord Admiral's players obeyed; but the Lord Strange's, in a contentious manner, went away to the Cross Keys, and played that afternoon, to the great offence of the better sort, who knew they were prohibited by order from the Lord Treasurer. So the Mayor committed two of them to the Counter, and prohibited all playing for the future, till the Lord Treasurer's pleasure was further known.”

Seymour also, in his *Survey of London and Westminster*, after briefly noticing a play, *anno* 1391, played by the Parish Clerks at the Skinners' Well beside Smithfield, which continued three days together, the King, Queen, and nobles of the land, being present; and another played in the year 1409, which lasted eight days, and was of matter from the creation of the world, observes:—“Of later times, instead of these stage plays, have been

used comedies, tragedies, interludes, and histories both true and feigned. For acting whereof certain public places, as the Theatre, the Curtain, &c. were erected. They played also in inns, as the Cross Keys, the Bull, the Globe, &c. But this which was once a recreation, and used therefor now and then occasionally, afterwards by abuse became a trade and calling, and so remains to this day. In those former days, ingenious tradesmen, and gentlemen's servants, would sometimes gather a company of themselves and learn interludes, to expose vice, or to represent the noble actions of our ancestors in former times; and these they played at certain festival times, and in private houses at weddings, or other splendid entertainments, for their own profit, acted before such as were minded to divert themselves at them."

From these passages, we learn the several stages through which acting passed, previously to becoming a regular trade and calling.

For the recreation and diversion of the Queen, the Students of the Inns of Court, and the Members of the Universities, acted plays before her.

These were entirely complimentary. The Queen paid nothing for witnessing, neither did the performers receive anything for enacting them.

Ingenious tradesmen, servants and retainers of noblemen, citizens, and gentlemen, also gathered a company of themselves together, and acted plays for the amusement of their customers and employers. These entertainments were of the same character, and dictated by the same feelings, as those given by the lawyers and university men to the Queen.

But, with the permission and license of the noblemen with whom they were connected, these servants and retainers sometimes acted plays at certain festival times, and in private houses, “at weddings and other splendid entertainments, for their own profit.” Here we have a slight change in the nature of Play-acting; for though the play is still acted in a private house, and to a private audience, it is clear that the Actors perform for gain. Then—probably about the year 1570—came the final change, which has endured until the present time. Play-acting became a trade and calling, and certain persons devoted themselves exclusively to it as a means of livelihood. They were engaged by those who were minded to divert themselves at them, or they themselves engaged some House, Inn, or Yard, and admitted persons upon payment to witness their performances. .

Shortly after this great change in the economy of play-acting, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the city of London passed an act, which, after enumerating the moral and physical evils which resulted from "the inordinate haunting of great numbers of people, especially youth, to plays, interludes, and shows," enacts, "to the intent that such perils may be avoided, and the lawful, honest, and comely use of plays, pastimes, and recreations in good sort only be permitted," that "no play, comedy, tragedy, interlude, nor show, shall be *openly* played, wherein shall be allowed any words, examples, or any doing of any unchastity, sedition, nor such like unfit or unseemly matter, upon pain of imprisonment for fourteen days, and a penalty of £5 for every such offender."

This act also enacts, that every play, &c., shall be perused and allowed by a proper officer before it is performed, and no additional matter interlaced, added, mingled, or altered, after it has been so allowed, under a penalty. That no person shall suffer any plays to be openly played, or take any benefit or advantage from such performance, unless with the license and permission of the Chamberlain of the city of London. And after enacting that all persons so licensed, shall make a certain con-

tribution to the support of the hospitals or sick poor of the city of London, the act concludes thus :—"Provided always, that this act, otherwise than touching the publishing of unchaste, seditious, and unmeet matters, shall not extend to any plays, interludes, comedies, tragedies, or shews, to be played or shewed in the private house, dwelling, or lodging of any Nobleman, Citizen, or Gentleman, which shall or will then have the same there played or shewed in his presence for the festivity of any marriage, assembly of friends, or any like case, *without public or common collection of money of the auditory or beholders* thereof. Referring always to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen for the time being the judgment and construction according to equity, what shall be counted such a playing and shewing in a private place ; anything in this act to the contrary notwithstanding."

From this act we learn that in 1573, the players were in the habit of *openly* playing—that is, of acting plays to which any person might resort at different inns and taverns of the City.

These inns and taverns were of every variety of consequence and respectability, in accordance with the rank and character of the parties who resorted to them ; and as the company varied, so doubtless



did the nature and scale of the amusements thereat provided.

We may well suppose that one tavern-keeper would provide play-acting as part of the entertainment of his guests, as private individuals did for theirs. Another would allow actors to perform before his guests, obtaining from them, for themselves, such gratuitous remuneration as they could collect. Whilst another would let them the use of his House or Yard, with permission to impose a charge upon any person witnessing their performance.

Now, all this is provided for in the act of Common Council passed in the 17th of Queen Elizabeth. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen do not attempt to prevent plays being acted: their act only affects them when *openly* played. "The public or common collection of money of the auditory or beholders thereof," would seem to be a notable characteristic of open playing; but these wise mayors and aldermen, seeing that is not conclusive evidence, reserved to themselves "the judgment or construction, according to equity, of what shall be considered an open playing, and what a playing or shewing in a private place."

Against this act of Common Council, the Queen's



poor players, as they called themselves, petitioned the Lords of the Privy Council ; and, though they were countenanced and supported by Leicester, the act (or Remedies, as it was called) was not interfered with ; and shortly afterwards the Privy Council issued these rules for the regulation of the players. (This was during a visitation of the plague.)

“ That they (the players) hold themselves content with playing at private houses, at weddings, &c., without public assemblies.

“ If more be thought good to be tolerated, that they then be restrained to the orders of the act of the Common Council—*tempore* Hawes.

“ That they play not openly, till the whole deaths in London have been come in twenty days unto fifty a week, nor longer than it shall so continue.

“ That no plays be on the sabbath-day.

“ That no playing be on holidays, but after evening prayer, nor any received into the auditory until after evening prayer.

“ That no playing be in the dark, nor continue any such time but as any of the auditory may return to their dwellings in London before sunset, or, at least, before it be dark.

“ That the Queen’s players only be tolerated,

and of them their number and certain \* names to be notified in your lordship's letter to the Lord Mayor, and to the justices of Middlesex and Surrey; and those, her players, not to divide themselves into several companies.

“That for breaking any of these orders, their toleration cease.”

“But notwithstanding,” continues Strype, “these orders were not duly observed, and the lewd matters of plays increased; and in the haunt unto them were found many dangers, both for religion, state, honesty of manners, unthriftiness of the poor, danger of infection, &c.; and the preachers daily crying out against them, suit was made, that they might be banished the liberties of the City and places adjoining.”

This was accordingly done, and the players were not allowed license or permission for any performance within the city of London after the year 1575. To reconcile what took place in 1589 with this total expulsion of the players in 1575, we must believe, which we readily may, that during some mayoralties the act of Common Council was not so rigidly enforced as in others. Certain, however, it is, that the City, as a body, were sadly

\* Or, as we should now say, real names.

inimical to the poor players, and no theatre, that is, place for the exclusive performance of plays, was ever allowed within its liberties.

We have taken some pains to investigate the enmity the City authorities seem to have always entertained against the poor players, and it appears not to have been directed so much against plays as such, as against open playing, that is, playing to which the common people had access.

The word education,\* in Bacon's time, was almost exclusively used in relation to the body; learning was the word used to denote mental culture.

The policy of the times of Elizabeth was to educate or train the bodies of the people, and render them strong and athletic, but to keep their minds dull and ignorant. Bacon entertained a contrary opinion: he thought learning could not possibly do any one mischief. "It is manifest," says he,† "that there is no danger at all in the proportion or quantity of knowledge, how large so ever, lest it should make it (man's mind) swell or

\* "Certainly custom is most perfect, when it beginneth in young years; this we call education, which is, in effect, but an early custom."—Bacon's *Essays*.

† *Advancement of Learning*.

outcompass itself; no, but it is merely the quality of knowledge, which, be it more or less, if it be taken without the true corrective thereof, hath in it some nature of venom or malignity, and some effects of that venom, which is ventosity or swelling.”

A fear that the people might learn to think, and an unlucky tendency which the players had of ridiculing absurdity, had no small share in exciting the apprehension and provoking the animosity of the civic authorities. For we find it urged against the playhouse that it took the people away not only from the church, but also from the bear-baiting; whilst we find an alderman was even then an ordinary butt for the wits. When discoursing upon so grave a subject as Death, Bacon cannot “spare or pass by a jest” at them, he says:—

“Death finds not a worse friend than an alderman, to whose door I never knew him welcome; but he is an importunate guest, and will not be said nay. And though they themselves shall affirm, that they are not within, yet the answer will not be taken; and that which heightens their fear, is, that they know they are in danger to forfeit their flesh, but are not wise of the payment day; which sickly uncertainty is the occasion that for

the most part, they step out of the world unfurnished for their general account, and, being all unprovided, desire yet to hold their gravity, preparing their souls to answer in scarlet."

The pretence under which the players were banished the City, that is, as we understand it, forbidden to have any public performance within the liberties, is stated to have been the many dangers both for religion, state, honesty of manners, unthriftiness of the poor, danger of infection, &c. The City authorities at last proceeded in a very summary manner. Whilst the players were craftsmen, servants, and retainers, they felt compelled to give some show of reason for their conduct, which, under these altered circumstances, they appear to have considered much less necessary.

The principle upon which the City now proceeded, seems to have been—As they wont work, they sha'nt play. It is hardly so correct to say, play-acting became a trade and calling, as it is to say, these persons ceased to be "men of any occupation." They quitted their previous callings, and, as play-acting was not recognised as a craft, they became in the eye of the law, rogues and vagabonds—men with no obvious means of livelihood, and, as such, liable to be taken up and

punished by whipping, fine, or imprisonment. Finding themselves in this predicament, they applied to the Earl of Leicester, who obtained for them a protecting license from the Queen, contingent upon their good behaviour, and liable to be taken away at any time.

Thus the Queen's Players became licensed Vagabonds, as the Queen's Bedesmen were licensed Beggars.

It was to this class that William Shakespeare belonged.

We do but draw an historical portrait, painting it in black and white. We have no desire to disparage the Thespian art; in our Utopia, we should rank Players as Preachers; and we regret that our reading has led us to the conclusion, that Plays are not the legitimate descendants of the Mysteries, but spring from quite a different stock.

The playhouse is the people's sermon-book with pictures; its object should be to amuse, delight, instruct, exalt.

Whoever writes respecting the Theatre, feels constrained to say something about the Greek Drama and the Roman Plays, and then proceed to the Mysteries and Moralities; but we think it might easily be proved that the Mysteries and Mo-



ralities had as little to do with the British stage, as the Greek drama or Roman plays. The Mysteries and Moralities were, we doubt not, first produced for the purpose of propagating religion ; they were persevered in by the priests, to preserve their power. There was so much of fiction and absurdity mixed up with religious truth, that the people soon turned the tables upon the priests, and the persecuted Devil and the Vice became the most popular persons in the performance.

These Mysteries and Moralities were openly played by the parish clerks and others connected with the state religion, who thus endeavoured to influence the people. The public preachings at Paul's Cross and other places, the May meetings at Exeter Hall, the outpourings at Surrey Chapel or the Surrey Gardens, are their legitimate issue. The English drama had a much earlier and more domestic origin : Private playings commenced long before, and continued during, these public religious exhibitions, until, as we shall presently demonstrate, the theatre became an institution of the country. The child's exclamation, "*Let's play,*" is the *sesame* to the English drama. We may daily witness it on our domestic hearths. Your little boy will be papa, your little girl mamma, and dolly

shall be their child. Dolly is dandled, praised, and punished ; her dress and her duties arranged and rearranged, discussed and disputed over, till the playmates quarrel, and seek their parents to adjust their differences.

Here we have a domestic drama, representing the cares, passions, pleasures, and anxieties of life, and, as it were, carried on into a future of rewards and punishments.

The highest reach of the drama is but an amplification of this ; and none is enduring which is not founded on a basis as simple and natural.

Banish Hamlet from the precincts of the Court of Denmark—strip him of his inky cloak—forget the fine painting with the upturned eyes and the skull in the left hand—dress him in a frock-coat and plaid trousers—call him Mr. Brown or Mr. Smith—and, placed in circumstances equally perplexing, you shall find that an ordinary man would act, if not in a precisely, certainly in a proximately similar manner, to that pursued by the Prince of Denmark.

Like a skilful artist, the poet draws the natural figure, and then adds the appropriate drapery ; others, like milliners and tailors exhibiting their fabrics, make the outward semblance of a human



being, which, when we come to examine, we find as foreign to nature, as wire and whalebone are to flesh and blood.

Hamlet is not a grand conception, as we vulgarly count grandeur. It is more largely grand:—it is grand in the truth and simplicity of nature.—

## CHAPTER IX.

### PLAYHOUSES.

BUBBAGE and his fellows having, through the influence of Leicester, obtained a license from the Queen in 1574, they took a house in Blackfriars (which was then without the liberties of the City), and altered and fitted it up as a theatre in 1576.

The Theatre and the Curtain, two places in Shoreditch where plays were performed, appear to have been already in existence. Of these very little is known; and we are disposed to think the theatre in Blackfriars *the first public theatre*; though all the commentators and critics have chosen to consider it, what they denominate, a *private* theatre.

“Our old theatres,” says Collier, “were either public or private.”—“What,” says Malone, “were the distinguishing marks of a private playhouse, it is not easy to ascertain. We know only that it was smaller than those which were called public

theatres; and that in the private theatres, plays were usually presented by candlelight."

"From various authorities," says Collier, "I find that there were seven distinguishing marks of a private playhouse.

"1. Private theatres were of smaller dimensions than public theatres.

"2. They were entirely roofed in from the weather, while public theatres were open to the sky, excepting over the stage, and boxes or rooms.

"3. The performances at private theatres were by candle or torch light.

"4. They had pits furnished with seats; and not yards, as they were called in public theatres, where the spectators stood to behold the plays.

"5. The audience at private theatres usually consisted of a superior class of persons.

"6. The visitors there had a right to sit upon the stage during the performance.

"7. The boxes or rooms of private theatres were enclosed or locked."

Although agreeing with Mr. Tomlin, "that it is with diffidence that any one should differ with Mr. Collier in matters to which he has devoted so much ability, so perseveringly, and with such unusual advantages," yet it certainly would not be

difficult, "from various authorities," to controvert or explain away every one of these "seven distinguishing marks of a private playhouse."

Every one at all conversant with the subject, knows that several of these "distinguishing marks" were not peculiar to private playhouses; and, even if they were their usual characteristics, they, individually and collectively, afford no sufficient reason why such a theatre should be called private.

The word public is definite and intelligible enough. Private does not admit of so precise a definition. Oxford Street is a public way wherein we all may walk at all times. Lansdown Passage, the narrow passage between the gardens of Devonshire and Lansdown Houses, is a private way; so is the road through Hyde Park: yet the former is not discernible from a public way, except on Sept. 1, when it is closed; and the latter is essentially a public way to every one who does not rise before five in the morning, nor journey abroad after ten at night. It would be easy to enumerate various other ways which are so strictly private that few, or none, may walk therein.

In these cases, having defined what "public" is, we may safely assert that "private" is anything that is not public.

It has ever been held, that any place or theatre to which payment alone entitles any person to the right to enter, must be considered a public place or theatre.

A theatre being public or private did not, nor does not, depend upon its construction or the deportment of the auditory, but solely *in* the circumstances by which admission to it is obtained; and this is often so nice a question, that we see in the act we recently referred to, the Mayor and Aldermen wisely "*reserved to themselves* the judgment and construction, according to equity, as to what shall be counted such a playing or showing in a private place."

If the definition of public and private which we have endeavoured to establish, be correct, it will tend to elucidate much that has hitherto been obscure. Plays acted by students of the inns of court, and the members of the universities, before the Queen, and by servants and retainers before noblemen, citizens, and gentlemen, their employers, not being accessible to everybody, are doubtless to be considered private playings. But when these noblemen gave their servants permission to perform for their own profit, besides performing at private houses, at weddings, and other splendid entertain-

ments, they also played at inns and taverns. The professed players must have done so, until they obtained a theatre to themselves, and probably continued to do so after that time. But in either case the public playing did not depend upon locality; but wherever a play was *openly* played, that place was for the time being, whether a tavern or a yard, a public theatre.

The Blackfriars Theatre being exclusively devoted to the acting of plays, was in a special sense a public theatre, at which those persons who had adopted play-acting as a trade or calling found a local habitation, and carried on their occupation for the purpose of obtaining a livelihood.

Some writers will insist that this theatre at Blackfriars was the Drury Lane of the days of Elizabeth, and that the license granted to the players was equivalent to a modern patent. The very reverse of this was the fact: the license was not a mark of approbation, but of toleration; it was not so much to secure them certain privileges, as to confine them within due limits, and render them more promptly amenable to the law. Thus the last clause in the orders of the Privy Council expressly states—"That for breaking any of these orders, their *toleration* cease."

There is another sense in which the words public and private are used, which may possibly have misled Mr. Collier. Inns and taverns were called in the days of Elizabeth, as indeed they are now, public-houses; and when the actors performed at the Blackfriars, the Cockpit, and Salisbury Court, they called it playing at a private house; and performing at the Globe, the Cross Keys, or any inns or taverns, they called playing at a public house.

So a public house was ordinarily a private theatre, and the public theatre was a private house.

The following abstract from a pamphlet\* in the King's Library, British Museum, supports this view:

“Oppressed with many calamities, and languishing to death under a long and (for ought we know) an everlasting restraint, we, the comedians, tragedians, and actors of all sorts and sizes belonging to the famous *private* and *public* houses within the city of London and the suburbs thereof, to you Great Phœbus, and you Sacred Sisters, the sole patronesses of our distressed calling, do we in all humility present this our humble and lamentable complaint, by whose intercession to those powers

\* The Actors' Remonstrance or Complaint for the Silencing their Profession, and Banishment from their several Playhouses. London: Printed by Edw. Nickson, Jan. 24, 1643.



who confined us to silence, we hope to be restored to our pristine honour and employment.

“First, it is not unknown to all the audience that have frequented the *private* houses of Blackfriars, the Cockpit, and Salisbury Court, without austerity, we have purged our stages from all obscene and scurrilous jests; such as might either be guilty of corrupting the manners or defaming the persons of any men of note in the city or kingdome; that we have endeavoured, as much as in us lies, to instruct one another in the true and genuine art of acting, to repress brawling and railing, formerly in great request, and for to suite our language and action to the more gentile and natural garbe of the times.”

As our object is merely to point out the allusion to public and private houses, we shall not proceed with the quotation. The pamphlet will be found interesting to any one wishing to make himself acquainted with the quality of the public playhouse of this period

The interior architectural arrangements of an ancient theatre were much the same as those of the present day. The gallery, or scaffold as it was called, occupied three sides of the house, assuming, according to the plan of the building, a square or



semicircular form. Beneath this were small divisions called rooms, answering in almost every respect to our boxes; these seem occasionally to have been the property of private individuals, who in that case kept them locked. The centre part, which was then called the pit, had neither floor nor benches. The common people standing here to see the performances are therefore called in *Hamlet*, “groundlings” — a term repeated by Decker, who speaks of “the groundling and gallery commoner buying his sport by the penny.” The pit was separated from the stage by a paling; there was no intervening orchestra; the music, consisting of one or more trumpets, cornets, haut-boys, lutes, recorders, viols, or organs, was placed in a raised balcony, nearly occupying the space of the upper stage-box in our modern theatres. The stage was elevated above the pit as at present, and had an upper stage or gallery at the back, which had curtains to draw in front. Part of the performance was carried on in this upper stage, as when the actors were to speak from a window or battlement, or to overhear what was going on, on the lower stage. There were curtains sliding on rings and rods in other parts of the lower stage, through which the actors made their exits and en-

trances. It may with safety be affirmed that the Blackfriars Theatre had *originally* no scenery. The locality of the scene was indicated by a written paper placed at the back of the stage; the imagination of the audience supplied the rest.

Sir Philip Sydney, describing the state of the drama and the stage in his time, about 1583, says: —“ Now, you shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then you must believe the stage to be a garden. By-and-by, we have news of a shipwreck in the same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out an hideous monster, with fire and smoke, and the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while, in the mean time, two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field? ”

Hitherto the description of the theatre has reference to its appearance during the reign of Elizabeth. Decker mentions some other accommodation; but his work, *The Guls Horne Book, or Fashions to suit all Sorts of Guls*, was not published until 1609; he says, that there were private boxes on each side of the stage, “ almost smothered in darkness,” and also that seats or

stools were allowed to be placed on the stage, which were usually occupied by the wits, gallants, and critics of the day. "For by sitting on the stage," says he, "you have a signed patent to engross the whole commodity of censure; may lawfully presume to be a girder, and stand at the helm and steer the passage of scenes."

He enumerates other advantages appreciated by the fast men of his day.

The prices of admission seem to have varied from a penny up to a shilling, and even two shillings, upon some extraordinary occasions.

Prior to the commencement of the play, the audience amused themselves with cards, smoking tobacco, drinking ale, cracking nuts, and eating fruit, which were regularly supplied by men attending the theatre, by whose vociferations and clamour, as a writer of the time expresses it, "you were made adder-deaf by pippin cry." The stage had very little if any decoration; it was sometimes hung with black for tragedy; but the wardrobes are reported to have been costly. This we can readily suppose, as the actors performed upon all occasions in the court-dress of the period; and as the clothes of the nobility and gentry descended as heirlooms, and tinsel and tawdry as yet were not, much expense

must necessarily have been incurred in providing dresses. Sir Henry Wotton alludes to their magnificence in the letter to Sir Edmund Bacon, in which he narrates the destruction of the Globe Theatre, July 2nd, 1613:—

“Now, to let matters of state sleep I will entertain you with what hath happened this week at the Bankside.

“The King’s players had a new play, called *All is True*, representing some principall pieces in the reign of Henry VIII., which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting of the stage, the knights of the order, with their Georges and garter, the guards with their embroidered coats, and the like, sufficient in truth, within a while, to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous.

“Now, King Henry making a masque at the Cardinal Wolsey’s house, and certain chambers being shot off at the entry, some of the paper or other stuff wherewith one of them was stopped, did light on the thatch, where, being thought at first but an idle smoke, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly and ran round like a train, consuming within less than an hour the whole house to the very grounds. This

was the fatal period to that virtuous fabrique, wherein yet nothing did perish but wood and straw and a few forsaken cloaks; only one man had his breeches set on fire, that would perhaps have broiled him, if he had not, by the benefit of a provident wit, put it out with bottle-ale."

From what has been already advanced respecting players and theatres, we proceed to draw some inferences.

We believe the Blackfriars to have been a public theatre, and that the "common plaies," being accessible to every one who could command the small sum charged for admission, were resorted to by the very lowest of the people. We say the "common plaies"; for discarding Mr. Collier's distinction of public and private, and adopting the one suggested in its stead, renders intelligible the words, common plaies, which occur not unfrequently.

The "common plaies" were, we apprehend, the ordinary performances to which every one could obtain access upon payment; but occasionally noblemen and *others* commanded a play, and secured the house for themselves and their friends: thus the Blackfriars Theatre was, as every theatre since has been and is, both a public and a private theatre: public, in that the proprietors were licensed or

allowed to take money and admit any one to see the acting; but private, when it was secured or engaged, which at any time it might be, for a performance to which the general public were not admitted.

That the Whitefriars Theatre could be so engaged or "taken up," is evidenced by a letter (without date) of Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Edmund Bacon:—

"On Sunday last, at night, and no longer, some sixteen apprentices (of what sort you may guess, by the rest of the story) having secretly learnt a new play without book, intituled *The Hog has lost his Pearl*, took up the White Fryers for their theatre, and having invited thither (as it would seem) rather their mistresses than their masters, who were all to enter *per buletini*, for a note of distinction from ordinary comedians, towards the end of the play the sheriffs (who by chance had heard of it) came in (as they say) and carried some six or seven of them to perform the last act of it at Bridewell; the rest are fled. Now, it is strange to hear how sharp-witted the City is; for they will needs have Sir Thomas Swinnerton, the Lord Mayor, be meant by the Hog, and the late Lord Treasurer, by the Pearl."

At this public theatre, to which every one could obtain access, and the lowest of the people ordinarily resorted, the ordinary performances doubtless were, as it might be expected they would be, of the coarsest and most ordinary description. Yet we are called upon to believe that it was here that the wonderful works which we all so greatly admire, and feel that we can only properly appreciate by careful private study, were performed; and it was from the profit arising from this wretched place of amusement that Shakespeare realised the far from inconsiderable fortune with which he in a few years retired to Stratford-upon-Avon.

Commentators say, We do not find that the plays attributed to Shakespeare were ever performed at any other theatre. They do not say, which they might, We do not find that they were ever performed at this.

We cannot but think that the best plays must have been performed at the best, the most exclusive, that is, the private theatres—the theatres held at inns, taverns, &c., to which the most respectable portion of the community resorted.

Of these the Rose seems to have been at that time the most eminent.

It was here, and at similar places, before audiences capable of appreciating them, that these



plays doubtless were performed in their integrity. And Shakespeare's company made their money, either by supplying the actors at these superior theatres with dramas, or by performing them before those audiences themselves.

The only account we have of the performance of *Twelfth Night* is from the *Table Book* of John Manningham, student of the Middle Temple, and it confirms this idea:—

“February, 1601.—At our feast we had a play called *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, much like the *Comedy of Errors*, or *Menechmis* in Plautus, but more like or neare to that in Italian called *Inganni*. A good practice in it, to make the steward believe his lady widdowe was in love with him, by counterfeiting a letter as from a lady, in generall terms telling him what shee liked best in him, and prescribing his gestures, inscribing his apparaile, &c., and then, when he came to practise, making him believe they took him to be mad.”—Knight's *Cyclopædia of London*, from Harleian MSS.

That some of the plays may have been performed as “common plaies” at Shakespeare's own theatre, is very possible; but if they were, they were doubtless altered, mutilated, and interpolated, to suit the taste of that wretched audience.



## CHAPTER X.

### PLAY-WRITERS.

WE have seen how Play-acting, "which was once a recreation, and used therefor now and then occasionally, afterwards by abuse, became a trade and calling, and so remains to this day."

We have seen how plays, which were originally performed in the open air, and then at inns and taverns, had at length found a habitation of their own, and the playhouse was a recognised institution.

This state of things involved another and most important change; for, as plays were now continually being performed, in order that the actors might procure their daily bread, it became essential that there should be a continual supply of novelties to stimulate the curiosity of the public, and attract an audience.

It was of the first importance to the actors too, that the authors should be men that would produce

matter congenial to the taste, and level with the understandings, of those who came to hear it. The profound wisdom and the noble language of the writers of that time were ill suited for such a purpose. This new demand, therefore, called into existence an entirely new class of writers.

Men hitherto had written from the fulness of their souls ; these latter were more actuated by the emptiness of their stomachs. The editor of the *Illustrated London News* (December 6th, 1856) states :—" So far was the vocation of dramatist for pecuniary profit from being attended with dishonour or fraught with detriment to a writer's professional prospects, that Sackville, the Lord Treasurer under the reigns of Elizabeth and James, was a confessed dramatist."

The *Athenæum* (September 13th, 1856), says :—" Connection with ' poets and players ' was no bar to public employments, under either Elizabeth or James. Sackville, the Lord Treasurer under both reigns, was a poet and a dramatist. Sydney and Raleigh, though occupying places at court, and commanding armies and fleets, were poets. Some of the strongest men of the time, such as Donne, rose wholly by the tower of rhyme. *The Shepherd's Calender* made Spenser secretary to the

Lord Deputy of Ireland. A weakness for verses did not prevent Wotton from going as ambassador to Venice. Nay, poetry was no obstacle to success at the bar, for Davis was eminent as a poet before he was known as Irish Attorney-General or Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. All these facts help to prove that, if Bacon *were* the author of the Shakespeare Plays, he had some other motive for concealing the fact than the fears imagined by Mr. Smith."

We cannot find the slightest trace that these great men were either paid for writing, or obtained any pecuniary advantage by so doing. We believe that Bacon and others were, on the contrary, rather impoverished by it. So far from seeking pecuniary profit in the discharge of this self-imposed duty, they had often a greater regard to the general good, than to their own reputations.

"I have heard his lordship often say," writes Rawley, in the Address which precedes the *Sylva Sylvarum*, "that if he should have served the glory of his own name, he had been better not to have published this *Natural History*; but that he resolved to prefer the good of men, and that which might secure it, before anything that might have relation to himself."

“I hold every man,” says Bacon, in his Preface to the *Elements of the Common Law*, “a debtor to his profession; from which, as men of course do seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavour themselves, by way of amends, to be a help and ornament thereunto;” and he adds:—“I have in all points, to the best of my understanding and foresight, applied myself not to that which might seem most for the ostentation of my own wit and knowledge, but to that which may yield most use and profit to the students and professors of the laws.”

Hallam says of the learned men of that day:—“They deemed themselves a distinct caste, a priesthood of the same altar, not ashamed of poverty and the world’s neglect, but content with the praise of those whom themselves thought worthy of praise, and hoping something more from posterity than they obtained from their own age.”

“I account,” says Bacon, in his Dedication to *An Advertisement touching a Holy War*, “the use that a man should seek of the publishing of his own writings before his death, to be but an untimely anticipation of that which is proper to follow a man, and not to go along with him.”

Ben Jonson says:—“Poetry, in this latter age,

hath proved but a mean mistress to such as have wholly addicted themselves to her, or given their names up to her family. They who have but saluted her by-the-by, she hath done much for, and advanced in the way of their own profession (both the law and the gospel), beyond all they could have hoped or done for themselves without her favour.”

A learned man\* laments—“that scientific and literary men have, with us, no recognised social position. A man of science, who is perhaps making the most wonderful discoveries, is obliged to obtain the degree of doctor, and make use of his academical title, in order to claim a social position; and a literary man will get called to the bar, at which he will never practise, in order to be somebody, because, as a writer or a man of taste, he belongs to no class, is therefore nobody, and he wants to classify himself somewhere.” Surely the Cardinal does not state the case candidly. Wisdom and learning have, with us, their fit and appropriate rewards. He that exercises his talents in the service of his country—who enrolls himself a member of the church, the law, and the state—is ho-

\* Dr. Wiseman, in his *Lecture on the Influence of Words or Thought, and on Civilization*.

noured for his devotion, and in most cases rewarded in proportion to his merits. The man who uses his learning solely for "lucre or profession," falls into quite a different position.

No self-conferred general name can distinguish or give distinction to the literary or scientific man : like mixed seed cast on the garden border, when it is grown up, some will be strong by drawing much nourishment to itself; some prized for the beauty of its form or richness of its colour; or other its individual excellences; but none, simply because it grew in the garden border.

When acting and authorship became "a trade and calling," those who had acted gratuitously, and the wise and noble who had published their lucubrations from the worthiest motives, looked down upon these new men with the utmost contempt.

Though in this our day we can but rejoice at an arrangement which has brought a Macaulay, a Bulwer, a Landor, a Carlyle, to be as it were, in the pay of the public, we cannot wonder that at the commencement of the system, the great men of the day should view this new order of writers as virtuous women do their fallen sisters, and class actors and authors in the category of courtezans.

Nor can it be denied, that learning lost much of

dignity, and language, power, by this decadency. Independence of the censure of the reader, gives freedom to the pen of the writer, and the desire to convey the idea, and not cover the page, condenses the style. We believe this is the secret of the excellence of Elizabethan literature. Certainly never since, has so much wisdom been written in so few words. Books now are like unsafe banks: the bullion is disproportionate to the issue of paper; and matter which might be communicated in a month, and condensed into a shilling, by a system of Circumlocution, is made to maunder through twenty months, to produce a pound.

Our conclusion is, that it would have been a disgrace to the noble Bacon to have owned himself the literary hack of the part proprietor of a paltry playhouse.

And here we may note that all the hireling writers for the players were men of education, members of the universities, and in some instances ordained clergymen. Yet in none of their works are there so frequent classical allusions as in the Shakespeare Plays; and in these latter, the references have not regard to what we may call school classics, but to authors seldom perused but by profound scholars. Nor is the classical knowledge



exhibited of a superficial character; as Pope observes:—"We find him *very knowing* in the customs, rites, and manners of antiquity. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*, not only the spirit, but manners, of the Romans are exactly drawn; and still a nicer distinction is shown between the manners of the Romans in the time of the former, and of the latter. No one is more a master of the poetical story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it: Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shown more learning this way than Shakespeare."

"Without reviving the debated question of Shakespeare's learning," says Hallam,\* "I must venture to think that he possessed rather more acquaintance with the Latin language than many believe. The phrases, unintelligible and improper, except in the sense of their primitive roots, which occur so copiously in his plays, seem to be unaccountable on the supposition of absolute ignorance. In the *Midsummer Night's Dream* these are much less frequent than in his later dramas; but here we find several instances: thus, 'things base and vile, holding no *quantity*,' for value; rivers, that 'have overborn their *continents*,' the *continente*

\* *Literature of Europe*, part ii. chap. vi. sec. 41.



*riva* of Horace; ‘*compact* of imagination’; ‘something of great constancy,’ for consistency; ‘sweet Pyramus *translated* there’; ‘the law of Athens, which by no means we may *extenuate*.’ I have considerable doubts whether any of these expressions would be found in the contemporary prose of Elizabeth’s reign, which was less overrun with pedantry than that of her successor; but, could authority be produced for Latinisms so forced, it is still not very likely that one who did not understand their proper meaning would have introduced them into poetry.”

Hallam adds in a note:—“The celebrated essay by Farmer, on the learning of Shakespeare, put an end to such notions as we find in Warburton, and many of the elder commentators, that he had imitated Sophocles, and I know not how many Greek authors. Those, indeed, that agree with what I have said in a former chapter, as to the state of learning under Elizabeth, will not think it probable that Shakespeare could have acquired any knowledge of Greek. It was not a part of such education as he received. The case of Latin is different: we *know* that he was at a grammar-school, and could hardly have spent two or three years there, without bringing away a certain por-

tion of the language.” We *know* that there was a grammar-school at Stratford-upon-Avon; but, with all deference to Mr. Hallam, that William Shakespeare was at it, or any other school, is just what we do *not* know.

In an age of bigotry and religious persecution, we find Bacon and Shakespeare expressing a toleration of all creeds and religions. We find the ethics of the player and the philosopher to be identical; and we find them uniting their efforts to suppress and exterminate the fashionable, foolish, and wicked practice of duels.

We can imagine the philosopher defining it as “a fond and false disguise or puppetry of honour;\*” the statesman denouncing it as “a desperate evil,” since “it troubleth peace, it disfurnisheth war, it bringeth calamity upon private men, peril upon the state, and contempt upon the law.”† But we may well be surprised, in that age, to find the dramatist never once mentioning the private duel with approval, but attacking the practice with the keenest shafts of his ridicule, and both poet and

\* The charge of Sir Francis Bacon, Knight, the King’s Attorney-General, touching duels, upon an information in the Star Chamber against Priest and Wright, with the decree of the Star Chamber in the same cause.

† *Ibid.*

politician rejoicing in the prospect of its speedy extinction, since it cannot but be "that men of birth and quality will leave the practice when it begins to be vilified, and come so low as to barber-surgeons and butchers, and base mechanical persons."\*

"There is," says Archbishop Whateley, "an ingenious and philosophical toy called a 'thaumatrope,' in which two objects painted on opposite sides of a card—for instance, a man and a horse, a bird and a cage, &c.—are, by a quick rotatory motion, made so to impress the eye in combination, as to form one picture—of the man on the horse's back, the bird in the cage, &c. As soon as the card is allowed to remain at rest, the figures of course appear as they really are, separate and on opposite sides."

Bacon and Shakespeare we know to be distinct individuals, occupying positions as opposite as the man and the horse—the bird and the cage; yet, when we come to agitate the question, the poet appears so combined with the philosopher, and the philosopher with the poet, we cannot but believe them to be identical.

\* *Ibid.* p. 88 *ante*.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *ATHENÆUM* AND OTHER OBJECTORS ANSWERED.

HAVING candidly communicated and, we trust, successfully combatted the main objection urged by our adversary, we feel ourself at liberty to quote the arguments he has adduced in our behalf.

“ We believe,” writes the editor of the *Athenæum* (Sept. 13, 1856), “ that a very plausible case could be made against the assumed authorship of William Shakespeare by any one with knowledge of the times. There is, for example, the one great fact to begin with—Shakespeare never claimed the plays as his own. His poems he claimed, and his sonnets he claimed; and there is an undoubted difficulty in understanding how a man who cared about *Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, could be negligent about *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Yet Shakespeare was unquestionably indifferent about the dramas which were played in his name at the

theatres and at the court, and died without seeing the most remarkable series of intellectual works which ever issued from the brain of man, set in the custody of type. In the second place, the plays contain many lines which allude, or which we fancy allude, to passing events—such as Coke's brutality on Raleigh's trial, the three *thous* so keenly caricatured in *Twelfth Night*, and many more; and it is natural to infer that these allusions came from some one higher in station than a poor player—from Bacon, who hated Coke, or from Raleigh, who smarted under his insolence. In the third place, some of the references of contemporaries to Shakespeare admit of being tortured into a charge, that he did not invent the dramas which appeared under his name:—for example, when Greene says, in his *Groat's-worth of Wit*,—‘There is an upstart crow *beautified in our feathers*, in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a country,’ what more easy than to say that Shakespeare, in the opinion of contemporary dramatists, was only a borrower, an adapter of other men's work, like some of the salaried poets of our present theatres, whose qualifications are described as carpentry and French? In the fourth place, the legal references in some of the plays are so numerous and so

minute, as to suggest, and almost infer, a legal origin for these particular dramas. Then, in the fifth place, there is the very suspicious fact *that Bacon nowhere mentions Shakespeare*. Bacon was rather fond of speaking of his great contemporaries—of quoting their wit and recording their sayings. In his *Apophthegms* we find nearly all that is known about Raleigh's power of repartee. How came such a gatherer of wit, humours, and characters to ignore the greatest man living? Had he a reason for his omission? It were idle to assume that Bacon failed to see the greatness of *Lear* and *Macbeth*. There must have been some reason for his silence. What reason? But the most striking difficulty, perhaps, lies in the descriptions of foreign scenes, particularly of Italian scenes, and of sea-life, interwoven with the texts of the plays—descriptions so numerous and so marvellously accurate, that it is almost impossible to believe they were written by a man who lived in London and Stratford, who never left this island, and who saw the world only from a stroller's booth. Every reader of the plays has felt this difficulty, and theories have been formed of imaginary Shakespeare travels, in order to account for the minute local truth and the prevalence of local colour. It

is not easy to conceive the *Merchant of Venice* as coming from the brain of one who had never strolled on the Rialto, or sunned himself on the slopes of Monte Bello. Without warrant of any sort beyond the internal evidence of the play, Mr. Brown and Mr. Halliwell have boldly adopted the theory of an Italian journey; though when and how it could have been performed, in the course of a life so brief and so busy as Shakespeare's was, between his marriage and his retirement from the stage, is a mystery not more perplexing than the local knowledge it would serve to explain. . . . Out of a hundred points and arguments like these, a theory might be framed—of course, a theory not defensible against serious attack—but plausible enough on paper. . . . Mr. Smith has scarcely made the semblance of a case. His reasoning is wholly inferential and hypothetical."

Our reasoning, we admit, is "wholly inferential and hypothetical"; and so is that which attributes these productions to William Shakespeare. They infer that they were written by him upon the strength of the "hypothesis," that all works are written by the authors whose names are attached to them. They reject *Pericles*, the *Two Kinsmen*, &c., upon the hypothesis that the names of



superior writers are often attached to works of inferior merit. They infer that he wrote the superior works, because they can find no evidence that he was capable of the inferior; and they reject the inferior, upon the hypothesis that he that can write well cannot write badly.

Surely no creed of man's concocting ever required so great faith, was more contradictory or more incomprehensible.

which to believe—

Must be a faith, that reason without miracle  
Should never plant in me.

*Lear.*

And is it true that Shakespeare “claimed the poems and the sonnets”? Archimedes is reported to have said, boasting of the power of the lever, “Give me a spot to stand on, and I will move the world.” So certain critics exclaim, “Grant Shakespeare wrote the sonnets, and we will prove he wrote the plays.” Yet surely the question at issue is none other than this:—Was William Shakespeare a poet, or was he simply a player and part proprietor of a paltry playhouse? If he was a poet, it is more than probable that he wrote the plays; if he wrote the plays, it is certain that he was a poet.

We do not intend now critically to consider the

sonnets; we hope to do so at some future time; but we will briefly state our belief, that many of the phases of Bacon's early life might be traced in them.

Bacon owns to having written one sonnet. In *The Apology of Sir Frances Bacon in certain Imputations concerning the late Earl of Essex*, he writes:—

“And as sometimes it cometh to pass that men's inclinations are opened more in a toy than in a serious matter, a little before that time, being about the middle of Michaelmas term, her Majesty had a purpose to dine at my lodge at Twickenham Park; at which time I had, though I profess not to be a poet, prepared a sonnet directly tending and alluding to draw on her Majesty's reconcilment to my Lord ——. This, though it be, as I said, but a toy, yet it showeth plainly in what spirit I proceeded.”

Certainly, the allusion to “another's neck,” in Sonnet 131, might be much more readily construed to apply to the Earl of Essex, than the “Hews,” in Sonnet 20, made to refer to Mr. William Hughes.

With regard to

Tobie Matthew's

“Postc.—The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea, is of your lordship's name, *though he be known by*

*another*,”—the *Athenæum* observes:—“Mr. Smith does not tell us what *he* infers from this expression of one of the reprobates about the court,” and adds,—“We do not care to guess.”

We paraphrase the passage thus:—“The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea, is of the name of Bacon, though he is known by the name of Shakespeare.”

The following is an extract from a letter, without date or address, which is to be found in Tobie Matthew’s collection of letters; like the above postscript, it is very mysterious:—

“I will not promise to return you weight for weight, but Measure for Measure; and I must also tell you beforehand, that you are not to expect any other stuff from me, than fustian and bombast, and such wares as that. For there is no venturing in richer commodities, and much less upon such as are forbidden. Neither, indeed, do we know what is forbidden and what not: for both the restraint and the penalty are determined by the discretion of the officers, and not by the letter of the law. And there is a certain judge in the world, who, in the midst of his popularity towards the meaner sort of men, would fain deprive the better sort of that happiness which was generally done in that time, whereof

Tacitus wrote when he complained, that—"Memoriam ipsam cum voce perdidissimus. Si in nostra potestate esset, tam oblivisei-quam tacere."

In the Address to the Reader which precedes this collection of letters, Tobie Matthew writes.—

"It will go near to pose any other nation of Europe to muster out in any age four men, who, in so many respects, should excel four such as we are able to show—Cardinal Wolsey, Sir Thomas More, Sir Philip Sidney, and Sir Francis Bacon. \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* The fourth was a creature

of incomparable abilities of mind,—of a sharp and catching apprehension,—large and faithful memory,—plentiful and sprouting invention,—deep and solid judgment for as much as might concern the understanding part:—a man so rare in knowledge, of so many several kinds,—indued with the facility and felicity of expressing it all, in so elegant, significant,—so abundant and yet so choice and ravishing a way of words, of metaphors, and allusions,—as perhaps the world has not seen since it was a world.

"I know this may seem a great hyperbole and strange kind of riotous excess of speech; but the best means of putting me to shame, will be for

you to place any man of yours, by this of mine."

How was it the name of William Shakespeare—a man equal, if not superior to Bacon, in the points enumerated—did not occur to Sir Tobie Matthew?

Mr. Francis Bacon, writing to this same Mr. Tobie Matthew, says:—"Of this, when you were here, I showed you some model; at what time, methought, you were more willing to hear *Julius Cæsar*, than Queen Elizabeth commended."

These are but slight matters; but, as Bacon observes, "You may see great objects through small crannies or levels."

Tobie Matthew was not the reprobate the *Athenæum* represents him. Though the son of an archbishop, he unfortunately became what we now call a "pervert," and was banished the country. Like

Master Duck,  
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on,  
Had he liv'd here 't'ad been good luck,  
For then we'd had an odd on'.

Rome's gain was England's loss; for he would doubtless have been to Bacon what Boswell was to Johnson. They were very much attached, and during the short time he was over here, he was continually with Bacon.

John Chamberlayn, Esq., writes to Sir Dudley Carleton :—

“London, May 24th, 1617.—Sir Toby Matthew is come, and was last night at Mr. Secretary’s, who dealt earnestly with him to take the oath of allegiance. It was lost labour, though he told him, without doing it, the King would not endure him here long.

“But, perhaps, he presumes upon the Lord Keeper’s favour, which indeed is very great now at first, if it continues, for he lodgeth him at York House, and carries him next week along with him to his house at Gorhambury, near St. Alban’s.”—Again, in October, 1617, he writes, that “Tobie Matthew has grown very gay or gaudy in his attire, which I should not have expected of his years or judgment.”

Popery has not much credit in his conversion : it commenced by an imposition, and was consummated by wit and humour. The first impression made upon him, he says, arose from the devout behaviour of the rustics in the churches abroad, and from being convinced of the reality of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples ; but that his complete conversion was reserved for Father Parsons, who gave him to read Mr. William



Reynolds's *Reprehension of Dr. Whitaker*, which he esteemed the most valuable work on Wit and Humour he had ever read.

Tobie Matthew, says his biographer, affected the reputation of a man of universal genius, and certainly possessed many accomplishments.

He was a poet, a painter\* (*quære*), and a man of gallantry. His excellent constitution required but few hours' sleep, which he frequently took in a great chair; and rising by break of day, he used to dip his head in cold water; he was then fresh as the morning and in spirits to write panegyrics on Lady Carlisle, or to pursue whatever else was started by his volatile fancy.

Hygeian literature has to deplore the loss of his Treatise "On the Benefit of Washing the Head every Morning." His Romish religion seems to have been to him as his great chair and morning bath.

Wearied with his little sins, he reposed in her bosom; and dipping in the waters of absolution, felt himself restored and free—to sin again.

By the kind permission of Dr. Neligan, we have inserted in the Appendix "A Brief Description of

\* Lord Orford says he painted a portrait of the Infanta, but we can only find that he drew it "in words."



a curious Manuscript, entitled a true Historical Relation of the Conversion of Sir Tobie Matthew to the Holy Catholic Church, with the Antecedents and Consequents thereof."

The manuscript, could it now be traced, would make an interesting volume, worthy of publication by the Camden or any other literary society.

Here we may as well reply to some other of our friendly objectors :—"I fear," says one, "the edge of Mr. Smith's argument is turned by the fact that there are a greater number of blunders, especially geographical and classical errors, in Shakespeare's plays than Lord Bacon could have committed even in his earliest youth. It is to be observed that in all *popular* knowledge Shakespeare was a master. He does not err in his illustrations drawn from hunting and hawking and natural phenomena, or in such natural history as is learnt from close observation of the habits of animals. He only blunders in things which could only have been derived from book learning, in which Bacon excelled."

The so-called "blunders," we contend, are "beauties" in strict accordance with Bacon's exalted notions of poetry, "which, being not tied to the laws of matter, may at pleasure join that which nature hath severed, and sever that which nature

hath joined, and so make unlawful matches and divorces of things.”—*Advancement of Learning*.

Certain boldnesses of expression are no more indications of ignorance, than Bacon’s *Christian Paradoxes* are proofs of profaneness.\* Each are emanations of a mind superior to such suspicions.

And our objector surely can never have read Bacon’s *Natural History*, or the following observations in his contemporary, Osborne’s, *Advice to a Son*, part ii. sec. 24:—

“And my memory neither doth (nor I believe possibly ever can) direct me to an example more splendid in this kind, than the Lord Bacon, Earl of St. Alban’s, who in all companies did appear a good proficient, if not a master, in those arts entertained for the subject of every one’s discourse. So as I dare maintain, without the least affectation of flattery or hyperbole, that his most casual talk deserveth to be written, as I have been told, his

\* Lord Campbell says:—“Notwithstanding the stout denial that he (Bacon) was the author of the *Paradoxes*, I cannot doubt that the publication is from his pen, and I cannot characterise it otherwise than as a profane attempt to ridicule the Christian faith.”—*Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, vol. ii. p. 430.

We have never yet met with a person who, *having read* “The Characters of a Believing Christian, in Paradoxes or seeming Contradictions,” has concurred in the judgment pronounced by the Lord Chief Justice of the Queen’s Bench.

first or foulest copies required no great labour to render them competent for the nicest judgments : high perfection, attainable only by use and treating with every man in his respective profession, and which he was most versed in.

“So as I have heard him entertain a country lord in the proper terms relating to hawks and dogs, and at another time out-cant a London surgeon. Thus he did not only learn himself, but gratify such as taught him, who looked upon their calling as honoured by his notice. Nor did an easy falling into arguments (not unjustly taken for a blemish in the most) appear less than an ornament in him ; the ears of his hearers receiving more gratification than trouble ; and no less sorry, when he came to conclude, than displeased with any that did interrupt him. Now, the general knowledge he had in all things, husbanded by his wit and dignified with so majestic a carriage he was known to own, struck such an awful reverence in those he questioned, that they durst not conceal the most intrinsic part of their mysteries from him, for fear of appearing ignorant or saucy. All which rendered him no less necessary than admirable at the council-table, when in reference to impositions, monopolies, &c., the meanest manu-

factures were an usual argument; and, as I have heard, he did in this baffle the Earl of Middlesex, who was born and bred a citizen, &c. Yet without any great (if at all) interrupting his abler studies, as is not hard to be imagined of a quick apprehension, in which he was admirable.”

The *Illustrated London News* (Oct. 25, 1856) thus epitomises our arguments:—“The sum of Mr. Smith’s argument may be expressed in a few words. That these thirty-six plays should have been written by the ‘Warwickshire lad,’ Shakespeare, is a wonder; that they should have been written by Lord Bacon would have been none.” After quoting the *Returne from Parnassus*, Decker and Meres, and Coleridge’s observations on the Poems and Sonnets, the editor proceeds:—“As to his (Shakespeare’s) general capacity, manifested by his conversation with other great minds, Fuller bears *personal* testimony. ‘Many were the Wit Combats,’ says he, ‘between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. I beheld them like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. Shakespeare—like the latter, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing—could turn with all tides, tack about, and take ad-

vantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.’”

We pointed out to the editor, that Fuller was only eight years old when Shakespeare died, and therefore was not likely to have been an eyewitness of these “Wit Combats.” Moreover, the passage from Fuller is misquoted: he did not write, “I beheld,” but “I behold them”—that is, I picture them to my mind.

It is these picturings and imaginings of circumstances which might have occurred,—and recording them as events which did really happen,—that has encumbered the life and works of Shakespeare with such a mass of error. The keen desire to know something has bred an easy willingness to believe anything; and Bacon’s observation upon Poetry is peculiarly applicable to the life of Shakespeare—“because the acts and events of (his) true history have not that magnitude which satisfieth the mind of man,” Imagination “feigneth acts and events greater and more heroical.”

Fuller knew so little of, and inquired so little after, Shakespeare, that the entry in his original work stands thus:—“He died *anno Domini* 16 . .” Nichols notes:—“It is a little remarkable, that Dr. Fuller should not have been able to fill up this

blank, which I should have done silently (as I have in numberless other instances) ; but that I think it right to notice how little was then known of the personal history of the sweet Swan of Avon—who died April 23, 1616.”

The essay on “Cavilling,” in Blackwood’s *Edinburgh Review*—which we have briefly noticed in our Preface—we have read right through, and find ourselves neither wiser nor better from the performance of this penance. There is nothing to notice, and but little to approve, in that prosy production.

“As I have only taken upon me to ring a bell to call other wits together, which is the meanest office,” to repeat Bacon’s words,\* “it cannot but be consonant to my desire, to have that bell heard as far as can be.” We therefore heartily thank all those who have in any way assisted our endeavour. It is our theory—not ourselves—we wish to have known and considered—content if our little book

but serves the *public* mind to wake,  
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake.

As a recent writer (the *Times*, March 25, 1857) observes:—“When questions are once stirred up, the water must be muddy before it is clear again.

\* Letter to Dr. Playfere.



This is almost a law of nature. Generally speaking, the first result of what is called ‘thinking over’ any subject to yourself, is simply to puzzle yourself; you are not only not benefited, you are considerably worse off for your pains. You have left the daylight of simple, natural common sense, and got into a dark intellectual chamber of your own making, in which you go groping about with the help of small apertures and passage windows. When you emerge out of this gloom, you are sometimes indeed the gainer by your experience, and regain your common sense, with the addition of some clearness and accuracy: but it is not true that second thoughts are best. The proverb has made a mistake in its arithmetic: it is not second thoughts, but third thoughts, that are best. The first and last states are good, the middle is bad. Every important question should pass through the stage of fermenting, after which the irrelevant matter settles and goes to the bottom, and the liquor is clarified.”

“If it be Truth,” as Bacon writes,

“Non canimus surdis, respondent omnia sylvæ,

‘the voice of nature will consent, whether the voice of man do so or no.’”

We will conclude this portion of our subject by



quoting a communication from a friendly correspondent, which is well worthy of attention :—

“If in your Bacon-Shakespeare Inquiry,” he writes, “the purport of the following note has not been anticipated, it may perhaps furnish you with some hints for further argument.

“In Shakespeare’s Plays there is a dramatic series of historical events from the deposition of Richard II. to the birth of Elizabeth. But in this series there is one curious unaccounted-for hiatus—‘The Poet,’ as Charles Knight says, ‘has not chosen to exhibit the establishment of law and order in the astute government of Henry VII.’\* ”

“In Bacon’s works there are sundry fragments of a History of England. They are but mere hints, at once the token that the idea of a history had been present in Lord Bacon’s mind, and the evidence that it had not been worked out upon paper—at least in this way. But one reign is not a fragment, it is a history—the History of Henry VII.—the missing portion of the dramatic series; and the exhibition of the ‘establishment of law and order,’ which a genial editor of Shakespeare sees to be wanting to complete the unity of the dramatic series, is wrought out in Lord Bacon’s book.

\* *Pict. Shak. Histories*, vol. ii. p. 92.

“The *History of Henry VII.*, by Bacon, completes the series of the Shakespeare Histories from Richard II. to Henry VIII. It takes the story up, too, from the very place where, in Shakespeare, it is dropped. *Richard the Third* ends with Bosworth Field, with the coronation of Richmond, and the order for the decent interment of the dead. Bacon’s history begins with an ‘After,’ as if it was a continuation. And so it is—a continuation of the drama, taking up the history ‘Immediately after the victory,’ as Bacon writes in his second sentence. Not a word about Henry VII. as Earl of Richmond, nothing about the events which preceded the Battle of Bosworth—a story without a beginning: the beginning of it is found in the drama.”

## CHAPTER XII.

### POPULAR ERRORS RESPECTING LORD SOUTHAMPTON AND SHAKESPEARE.

THE popular opinion appears to be that William Shakespeare was *the* notoriety of his day. Part proprietor of the principal playhouse, which was the resort of the great and noble, he produced from time to time, plays which were at once the wonder and admiration of the town. Wise, witty, and accomplished, he was the universal favourite—the associate of the great and noble—the theme of every one's discourse—the subject of every one's admiration.

“From all the accounts of Shakespeare which have come down to us,” says Schlegel, “it is clear that his contemporaries knew well the treasure they possessed in him; and that they felt and understood him better than most of those who succeeded him. It is extremely probable that the poetical fame which in the progress of his career

he afterwards acquired, greatly contributed to enoble the stage, and to bring the player's profession into better repute. That he was not admitted into the society of persons of distinction, is altogether incredible. Not to mention many others, he found a liberal friend and kind patron in the Earl of Southampton, the friend of the unfortunate Essex. His pieces were not only the delight of the great public, but also in great favour at court: the two monarchs under whose reigns he wrote, were, according to a contemporary, quite 'taken' with him. Many were acted at court; and Elizabeth appears herself to have commanded the writing of more than one to be acted at her court festivals. King James, it is well known, honoured Shakespeare so far as to write to him with his own hand."

Though probably, as an actor, not superior to the court tragedian of the present day—adding to that his excellency as an author—we think, by combining the court favour now extended to the one and the other, we can form some faint conception of the honour he enjoyed in the heartier days of the Virgin Queen. Every thing theatrical participated, we are told, in his exaltation; and the actors of that era attained an eminence, personal and professional, which has never since been equalled.

Yet surely—if records are to be trusted—the very reverse of this was the case. The Blackfriars Theatre was essentially the People's Playhouse. When the new craft of professed players was expelled the City, the nobles and the citizens experienced no let or hindrance of their enjoyments. The Queen in her palace, the noble in his mansion, the lawyer at his hall, the citizen at his tavern or inn, still partook of their favourite pastimes. The measure was directed against the populace. The community, as a body, had no desire to interfere with, but, on the contrary, were anxious to promote, their pleasures and pastimes, in so far as they tended to increase their bodily strength and activity; bear-baiting, wrestling, fighting, and pitching the bar, they might freely practise: it was the awakening of their minds that they dreaded. The Mysteries and Moralities, which were to have overawed and controlled the multitude, had been already turned against their originators; and the little great men of that day, like the little great men of every succeeding age, dreaded the result to them, if the people should be educated.

Bacon alone stood forward as the advocate of education, denouncing as ignorant those that were opposed to the diffusion of knowledge. "I think

good," says he, "to deliver it from the discredits and disgraces which it hath received—all from ignorance, but ignorance severally disguised—appearing sometimes in the zeal and jealousy of divines; sometimes in the severity and arrogancy of politicians; and sometimes in the errors and imperfections of learned men themselves."

The Stage had a powerful opponent in the fanatical religion of the Puritans; but this was a fluctuating feeling, acting with greater or less force in individuals; the other pervaded the whole of the upper classes, and was expressed and acted upon most vigorously by those who, from their proximity, considered their province would be soonest invaded. Thus the citizens were anxious to annihilate the professed players; whilst the nobles, seeing less danger to themselves, were willing to be more indulgent to the people, and content with vindicating their power, by imposing rigorous restraints.

With regard to Shakespeare himself, though we greatly admire and reluctantly differ from Schlegel, we cannot but think his statement disingenuous when he says, "*Not to mention many others*, he found a liberal friend and kind patron in the Earl of Southampton." He must have known that the Earl of Southampton was the *only* noble name

with, which that of Shakespeare has ever been associated.

In the present day, when the position of a nobleman subjects him to the impertinence of being addressed by any one,\* it would be preposterous thence to presume the existence of any intimacy; and though formerly such freedom might not have been allowed, and the permission to dedicate prove a degree of knowledge and approval, yet in every case, it must be admitted, that a dedication seems to intimate inferiority rather than to infer intimacy. Few noblemen in that age of stern morality would have permitted their name to have been associated with a poem on such a subject as the *Venus and Adonis*; and the fact of Lord Southampton having done so, seems to prove him to have been at least as renowned in the annals of licentiousness as in the arena of literature. In truth, he was no Macænas, but something of a libertine, and every whit a soldier—"sudden and quick in quarrel," "seeking the bubble reputation e'en in the cannon's mouth." Banished from the court, he haunted the playhouse; addicted to duelling, and anxious to avenge his private wrongs, he forsook the service of

\* The author means this as an apology for having addressed his letter to a noble earl.



his country, and forgot his duty to his Queen. The distinctions of society were then so marked, and the distance between a nobleman and an actor, or even a dramatic writer, so vast, that the existence of a friendly intimacy is not to be unhesitatingly believed unless indisputably proved. Most of the facts recorded of Shakespeare were found or fabled after the Restoration; and the only probability that Queen Elizabeth ever saw, much less conversed with him,—arises from the circumstance of Heminge's company having performed before her, when probably he was one of the actors.

The story of the autograph letter of King James seems to be quite apocryphal; and "from the accounts which have come down to us," we should conclude that very few of Shakespeare's contemporaries knew anything at all of him.

"Several Englishmen," says Schlegel, "have given it as their opinion that the players of the first epoch were, in all likelihood, greatly superior to those of the second—at least with the exception of Garrick."

The quality of the audience is the best criterion of the capacity of the actors: if the audience was rude and uncultivated, it were hard to believe that the actors were cultured and refined.

The witty and worthless writers for the stage were wonderfully prolific in their productions. Heywood is reported to have written 220 pieces, and several others nearly as many. Among the numerous advantages arising from the absence of scenery and costume, may be accounted the ready access of authors to the stage, and the equal competition to which they were subjected. No consideration of expense deterred the acceptance of a piece. In all ages, managers have been more ready to tax the ingenuity of their companies to learn new parts, than to tax their own pockets to provide new scenery and dresses. In this, too, they act wisely; for how many avoid the theatre, because they have "seen the piece before," and how soon scenery and dresses pall.

Amid such a profusion of plays, so much better adapted to the taste of the multitude, it is impossible to believe that the small number attributed to Shakespeare, which were published during his lifetime, could have made any great sensation.

The Shakespeare Plays were never more popular nor better appreciated, than at the present day; because they are essentially addressed to the reading public, which was never so extensive as now.

The collected plays in the folio of 1623, were

read and appreciated by the then small portion of the community which constituted the reading public ; and new editions, in folio, were published to supply their libraries and studies, though there is no suggestion or tradition that they were ever performed for nearly one hundred years after the supposed author's decease.

We have spoken disparagingly of the Blackfriars Theatre, its plays and its actors ; but let us not be misunderstood. The People's Playhouse is, and ever must be, the foundation and support of England's drama. What we contend is, that these plays were beyond, and consequently not appreciated by, the age in which they were written.

Mysteries, Moralities, and Mummeries had satisfied the people whilst the Bible was a sealed book ; but when its truths were made known to them, and the great charter of freedom from priestcraft announced, that " whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man that it should be believed," they then served but as subjects for merriment.

As the contest of creeds had provoked a better knowledge of religion, so the contest of governments excited inquiry into civil affairs ; and under the third of the Stuarts the masses had attained an

intelligence wonderfully in advance of that which they possessed under the last of the Tudors. It is doubtful whether the closing of the theatre was so great a privation to the Londoners as it might seem; the excitement of the times might compensate their loss: the Royalists privately performing pasquinades in ridicule of the Puritans, and these latter, by attending preaching, supplying the excitement they had heretofore sought at plays. There can be no doubt, however, that this break disturbed the natural growth of the British Drama.

Upon the Restoration, the theatre was reopened under the management of Sir William Davenant, upon whom extensive privileges were conferred. The decorations, costumes, and other arrangements of the theatre, were after the most approved foreign model. The pieces produced were in accordance with the taste of the court, which was most licentious and profligate.

As the practice of vice is more consonant to men than habits of virtue, and as the extravagant indulgence in all lawful or unlawful pleasures was considered an evidence of loyalty, and in no way a disgrace, it is no wonder that public and private manners and theatrical entertainments exhibited a

grossness it is now hardly possible to credit. Some, doubtless, simulated vices they neither adopted nor approved, in order to be in the fashion; and many, with regret, countenanced what they could not alter, yet wished to see cured.

Thus the theatre continued to exist an exotic foreign to the soil of England, cheered by the feeble sunshine of the court, and sustained by the fickle breath of fashion. But towards the middle of the reign of Queen Anne, Betterton appeared at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and personated the characters of Othello, Brutus, and Hotspur.

It is an elegant passage of Guizot's, where he says:—"Imagine a man who has lived for a long time in rooms lighted only with wax-candles, chandeliers, or coloured glasses—who has only breathed in the faint suffocating atmosphere of drawing-rooms—who has seen only the cascades of the opera, calico mountains, and garlands of artificial flowers—imagine such a man suddenly transported, one magnificent July morning, to a region where he could breathe the purest air, under the tranquil and graceful chestnut-trees which fringe the waters of Interlacken, and within view of the majestic glaciers of the Oberland, and you will have a pretty accurate idea of the moral position of one accus-

tomed to the dramatic representations which formerly occupied our stage, when he unexpectedly finds himself witnessing these, so simple, grand, and natural beauties.”

But the change from the artificial drama of Charles II. to the natural of Shakespeare, or to Shakespeare in its natural state, was not so sudden or complete.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### TATE, KEMBLE, &c., THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF SHAKESPEARE.

IN the days of the Restoration, there lived a poet upon the face of the earth, his name was Nahum Tate.\* If the number of editions his verses have gone through, is a criterion of his excellence, we have no hesitation in saying, Nahum Tate is the greatest poet England ever produced.

\* Nahum Tate was the son of Dr. Faithful Tate, and was born in Dublin in 1652. At the age of sixteen, he was admitted to the college there. He succeeded Shadwell as Poet Laureate, and continued in that office until his death, which happened on the 12th of August, 1715, in the Mint, and was buried in St. George's Church. He was remarkable for a downcast look, and had seldom much to say for himself, but a free, good-natured, drinking companion. His dramatic works are—*Brutus of Alba*, T., 4to, 1678. *The Loyal General*, T., 4to, 1680. *King Lear*, T., altered from Shakespeare, 4to, 1681. *Richard II.*; or, *the Sicilian Usurper*, Hist. Play, 4to, 1681; printed under the latter title, 4to, 1691. *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth*; or, *the Fall of Coriolanus*, 4to, 1682. *Cuckold's Haven*; or, *an Alderman no Conjurer*, F., 4to, 1685. *Duke and no Duke*, F., 4to, 1685; taken from Sir Aston Cockayne's *Trappolin*. *The Island Princess*, Tragic Com., 4to, 1687. *Injured Love*; or, *the Cruel Husband*, T., 4to, 1707. *Dido and Æneas*, Op.—Oxberry's Edition of *Lear*, by N. T.



We have all sung "to the praise and glory of God" and Nahum Tate. Now, Nahum Tate knew not Shakespeare, and doubtless would have gone to his grave in that happy ignorance; but Nahum Tate had a friend, who, as Bacon says, "redoubleth joys."

John Boteler, Esq., said unto Nahum Tate—"Once upon a time there was a man called Shakespeare, who wrote a thing called *Lear*: a great genius such as you are, might make it into a play."

Now, Nahum Tate prided himself on play-writing as much as Psalmody, so he determined to do this very thing. When he had done it, he wrote a private letter to John Boteler, Esq. In those days of heavy postage, a single letter was a chargeable affair, and one that contained anything so heavy as Nahum Tate's thoughts would have been very expensive indeed. It was our habit, therefore, in those days to enclose letters in books and parcels. We believe it was felony to do so; few things in those days were not felony. A man could hardly stir without rendering himself *liable to the penalty* of hanging. However, few of the age of forty can own themselves free from this fault. Nahum Tate put his private letter into his published book, and we have purloined it. We

have done, as they ordinarily do at the Post-office—taken it because we thought there was something in it worth having; and whatever penalty it may have subjected us to, it will at least save the reader the penalty of purchasing the book.

Here the letter is:—

*“To my esteemed Friend, Thos. Boteler, Esq., 1681.*

“SIR,—You have a natural right to this piece, since by your advice I attempted the revival of it with alterations. Nothing but the power of your persuasion, and my zeal for all the remains of Shakespeare could have wrought one to so bold an undertaking. I found that the new modelling of this story would force me sometimes on the difficult task of making the chiefest persons speak something like their characters, on matter whereof I had no ground in my author. Lear’s real, and Edgar’s pretended madness, have so much of extravagant nature (I know not how else to express it), as could never have started but from our Shakespeare’s creating fancy. The images and language are so odd and surprising (and yet so agreeable and proper), that whilst we grant that none but Shakespeare could have formed such conceptions, yet we are satisfied that they are the

only things that ought to be said on such occasions. I find the whole to answer your account of it—a heap of jewels, unstrung and unpolished, yet so dazzling in their disorder, that I soon perceived that I had seized a treasure. *It was my good fortune to light on one expedient, to rectify what was wanting in the regularity and probability of the tale, which was to run through the whole, a love betwixt Edgar and Cordelia*, that never changed word with each other in the original. This renders Cordelia's indifference, and her father's passion, in the first scene probable. It likewise gives countenance to Edgar's disguise; making that a generous design that was before a poor shift to save his life. The distress of the story is evidently heightened by it; and it particularly gave occasion to a new scene or two, of more success (perhaps) than merit. This method necessarily threw me on making the tale conclude in a success to the innocent distress persons, otherwise I should have encumbered the stage with dead bodies, which conduct makes many tragedies conclude with unseasonable jests. Yet was I rackt with no small fears for so bold a change, till I found it well received by the audience; and if this will not satisfy the reader, I can produce an authority

which questionless will. [He then quotes Mr. Dryden's Preface to the *Spanish Friar*.] 'Neither is it so trivial a matter to make a tragedy end happily, for it is more difficult to save than to kill. The dagger and cup of poison are always in readiness; but to bring the action to the last extremity, and then by probable means to recover all, will require the art and judgement of a writer, and cost him many a pang in the performance.' One thing more I have to apologize for, which is, that I have used less quaintness of expression, even in the newest parts of this play. I confess 'twas design in me partly to comply with my author's style, to make the scenes of a piece, and partly to give it some resemblance of the times and persons here represented.

"Your obliged friend and humble servant,

"N. TATE."

Of course, Nahum Tate struck the Fool out of the play. The Poet Laureate knew that fools were not fit companions for kings. There have been profane persons who have said, that there have been kings who, when quite alone, had a fool to their company; but Nahum Tate was not a profane person; for, though given to drunkenness and

debt,—he loved kings, and wrote psalms and birthday odes.

The following is the title of Nahum Tate's precious production :—

THE HISTORY OF KING LEAR.

ACTED AT THE

QUEEN'S THEATRE.

REVIV'D, WITH ALTERATIONS,

By N. TATE.

LONDON :

Printed by H. Hills, for Richd. Wellington,  
at the Lute, in St. Paul's Churchyard; and  
E. Rumbold, at the Post House, Covent  
Garden; and sold by Benj. Lintott, at the  
Cross Keys, in St. Martin's Lane, 1699.

We have made our extracts from the acting copy, because, though we cannot imagine any to have read the play through, we must believe many to have sat out the performance.

THE THING CALLED *LEAR*, PUBLISHED IN 1623.*Actus Quartus, Scena Prima.**Enter EDGAR.*

Yet better thus, and knowne to be contemn'd,  
 Than still contemn'd and flatter'd, to be worst : \*  
 The lowest, most dejected thing of fortune,  
 Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear :  
 The lamentable change is from the *best*,  
 The *worst* returnes to laughter. Welcome then,  
 Thou unsubstantiall ayre, that I embrace!  
 The wretch that thou hast blown unto the *worst*,  
 Owes nothing to thy blasts.

*Enter GLOUCESTER and an OLD MAN.*

But who comes here? My father poorly led?  
 World, world, O world!  
 But that thy strange mutations make us { hate } thee,  
 Life would not yield to age. { wait }

*Old Man.* O my good lord, I have bene your tenant,  
 And your father's tenant, these fourscore yeares.

*Glo.* Away, get the away : good friend, begone ;  
 Thy comforts can do me no good at all,  
 Thee, they may hurt.

*Old Man.* You cannot see your way.

*Glo.* I have no way, and therefore want no eyes :  
 I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seene

\* Theobald says this sentiment is so much akin to a passage  
 in Ovid, that it seems to be taken directly from it :—

*Fortuna miserrima tula est*  
*Nam timor eventûs deterioris abest.*

*Epist. ii. lib. 2, ex Ponto.*



## NAHUM TATE'S NEW VERSION.

*Act IV. Scene 1.*

*Corn.* I will have my revenge e'er I depart his house.  
*Regan*, see here, a plot upon our state ;

[*Gives her a letter.*]

'Tis Gloster's character, who has betray'd  
 His double trust, of subject and of host.

*Reg.* Then double be our vengeance ; this confirms  
 Th' intelligence that we but now receiv'd  
 That he hath been this night to seek the King.  
 But, who, sir, was the kind discoverer ?

*Corn.* Our eagle, quick to spy, and fierce to seize,  
 Our trusty Edmund,

*Reg.* 'Twas a noble service ;  
 O, Cornwall, take him to thy deepest trust,  
 And wear him as a jewel at thy heart.

*Edm.* Think, sir, how hard a fortune I sustain,  
 That makes me thus repent of serving you.  
 Oh, that this treason had not been, or I  
 Not the discoverer !

*Corn.* Edmund, thou shalt find  
 A father in our love, and from this minute  
 We call thee Earl of Gloster ; but there yet  
 Remains another justice to be done,  
 And that's to punish this discarded traitor ;  
 But, lest thy tender nature should relent  
 At his just sufferings, nor brook the sight,  
 We wish thee to withdraw.

*Reg.* The grotto, sir, within the lower grove  
 Has privacy, to suit a mourner's thought. [*Aside to him.*]

*Edm.* And there I may expect a comforter—  
 Ha, madam ? [*Aside to her.*]

*Reg.* What may happen, sir, I know not ;  
 But 'twas a friend's advice. (*Aside to him.*) [*Exit Edmund.*]

*Corn.* Bring the traitor in.

Our meanes secure us ; and our meer defects  
 Prove our commodities. O deare sonne Edgar,  
 The food of thy abused father's wrath ;  
 Might I but live to see thee in my touch,\*  
 I'd say, I had eyes again.

*Old Man.* How now ? who's there ?

*Edg.* O gods ! who is't can say, I am at the worst ?  
 I am worse, than e'er I was.

*Old Man.* 'Tis poore mad Tom.

*Edg.* And worse I may be yet : the worst is not,  
 So long as we can say, this is the worst.

*Old Man.* Fellow, where goest ?

*Glo.* Is it a beggar man ?

*Old Man.* Madman, and beggar too.

*Glo.* He has some reason, else he could not beg.  
 I' th' last night's storme I such a fellow saw ; †  
 Which made me think a man, a worme. My sonne,  
 Came then into my minde, and yet my minde  
 Was then scarce friends with him.  
 (I've heard more since.)

As flies to wanton boyes, are we to th' gods ;  
 They kill us for their sport.

*Edg.* How should this be ?  
 Bad is the trade that must play foole to sorrow,  
 Ang'ring itself and others—Bless thee, master.

*Glo.* Is that the naked fellow ?

\* " I cannot but take notice, that these boldnesses of expression are very infrequent in our English Poetry, though familiar with the Greeks and Latins."—THEOBALD.

† We recollect an old blind organist who always used the expression, " I beg pardon, I did not see you at first."

*Enter GLOSTER.*

Bind fast his arms.

*Glo.* What mean your graces ?

You are my guests ; pray do me no foul play.

*Corn.* Bind him [*they bind him*], I say, hard, harder yet.

*Reg.* Now, traitor, thou shalt find —

*Corn.* Speak, rebel, where hast thou sent the King ?

Whom, spite of our decree, thou saved'st last night.

*Glo.* I'm tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.

*Reg.* Say where and why, thou has conceal'd him, traitor.

*Glo.* Because I would not see thy cruel hands

Tear out his poor old eyes, nor the fierce sister

Carve his anointed flesh ; but I shall see

The swift-wing'd vengeance overtake such children.

*Corn.* Sees't thou shalt never ; slaves, perform your work.

[*Servants take Gloster out.*]

Out with those treacherous eyes ; dispatch, I say.

*Glo. (within).* He that will think to live 'till he be old,  
Give me some help—O cruel ! oh ye gods !

*Edw.* Hold, hold, my lord, I bar your cruelty ;  
I cannot love your safety, and give way  
To such inhuman practice.

*Corn.* Ah, my villain !

*Edw.* I have been your servant from my infancy ;  
But better service have I never done you,  
Than with this boldness.

*Corn.* Take thy death, slave.

[*Stabs Edward, and puts up his dagger.*]

*Edw.* Nay, then, revenge, whilst yet my blood is warm !

[*Draws his sword, runs Cornwall through the body,  
and is carried off by two guards, R. H. Corn-  
wall is supported by servants.*]

*Reg.* Help here—are you not hurt, my lord ?

*Glo. (within).* Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature  
To quit this horrid act.

*Old Man.* Ay, my lord.

*Glo.* Get thee away : If for my sake,  
Thou wilt oretake us hence a mile or twaine  
I' th' way tow'rd Dover, do it for ancient love ;  
And bring some covering for his naked soule,  
Whom I'll intreate to leade me.

*Old Man.* Alack, sir, he is mad.

*Glo.* 'Tis the time's plague  
(When madmen leade the blind) :  
Do as I bid, or rather do thy pleasure ;  
Above the rest, be gone.

*Old Man.* I'll bring him the best Parrel that I have,  
Come on't what will.

[*Exit.*

*Glo.* Sirrah, naked fellow.

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a-cold ;—I cannot daub it further.

*Glo.* Come hither, fellow.

*Edg.* And yet I must ;  
Blesse thy sweete eyes, they bleede.

*Glo.* Know'st thou the way to Dover ?

*Edg.* Both stile and gate, horseway, and footpath : poor Tom  
hath been scar'd out of his good wits. Blesse thee goodman's  
sonne, from the foul fiend.

*Glo.* Here, take this purse, thou whom the heav'ns plagues  
Have humbled to all strokes : That I am wretched,  
Makes thee the happier : Heavens deale so still :  
Let the superfluous, and lust-dieted man,  
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see  
Because he do's not feele, feele your powre quickly :  
So distribution should undoo excess,  
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover ?

*Edg.* Ay, master.

*Glo.* There is a cliffe whose high and bending head

*Reg.* Out, treacherous villain,  
Thou call'st on him that hates thee; it was he  
That broach'd thy treason, show'd us thy dispatches;  
There—read, and save the Cambrian prince a labour,  
[*Throws the letter out to him.*]

*Glo. (within).* O my folly!  
Then Edgar was abused; kind gods, forgive me that!  
*Reg.* How is 't my lord? [To Cornwall.]

*Corn.* Turn out that eyeless villain, let him smell  
His way to Cambray; throw this slave upon a dunghill.  
Regan, I bleed apace; give me your arm.  
[*Exeunt Regan and Cornwall.*]

*Enter EDGAR in disguise.*

*Edg.* The lowest and most abject thing of fortune  
Stands still in hope, and is secure from fear.  
The lamentable change is from the best,  
The worst returns to better. Who comes here?  
[*Retires a little up the stage.*]

*Enter GLOSTER led by an OLD MAN.*

My father poorly led! deprived of sight,  
The precious stones torn from their bleeding rings!  
When will the measure of my woes be full?

*Old Man.* O, my good lord, I have been your tenant  
And your father's tenant, these foreshore years.

*Glo.* Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone;  
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;  
Thee they may hurt.

*Old Man.* You cannot see your way.

*Glo.* I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;  
I stumbled when I saw: O dear son Edgar!  
The food of thy abused father's wrath,  
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,  
I'd say I had eyes again.

*Edg.* Alas! he's sensible that I was wronged,

Looks fearfully in the confined deep :  
 Bring me but to the very brimme of it,  
 And I'll repayre the misery thou do'st bear,  
 With something rich about me : from that place  
 I shall no leading neede.

*Edg.* Give me thy arme ;  
 Poore Tom shall leade thee.

*Scena Secunda.*

*Enter GONERIL, BASTARD, and STEWARD.*

*Gon.* Welcome, my lord. I marvell, our mild husband  
 Not met us on the way.  
 Now, where's your master ?

*Stew.* Madam, within ; but never man so chang'd ;  
 I told him of the army that was landed :  
 He smil'd at it. I told him you were comming,  
 His answer was, the worse. Of Gloster's treachery,  
 And of the loyal service of his sonne  
 When I informed him, then he call'd me sot ;  
 And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out.  
 What most he should dislike, seems pleasant to him ;  
 What like, offensive.

*Gon.* Then shall you go no further.  
 It is the cowish terrour of his spirit,  
 That dares not undertake : he'll not feelee wrongs  
 Which tye him to an answer ; our wishes on the way  
 May prove effects. Backe, Edmund, to my brother ;  
 Hasten his musters, and conduct his powres,  
 I must change names at home, and give the distaff  
 Into my husband's hands. This trustie servant  
 Shall passe betweene us : e'er long you are like to heare  
 (If you dare venture in your owne behalfe)

And should I own myself, his tender heart  
Would break betwixt the extremes of grief and joy. [Aside.

*Old Man.* How now? who's there?

*Edg. (advancing R. H. of Gloucester).* A charity for poor Tom. Play fair and defy the foul fiend.

O gods! and must I still pursue this trade,

Trifling beneath such loads of misery?

*Old Man.* 'Tis poor mad Tom.

*Glo.* In the late storm I such a fellow saw,  
Which made me think a man a worm.

Where is the lunatick?

*Old Man.* Here, my lord.

*Glo.* Get thee now away; if for my sake  
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or two,  
I 'th' way to Dover, do 't for ancient love,  
And bring some cov'ring for this naked wretch,  
Whom I 'll intreat to lead me.

*Old Man.* Alack, my lord, he's mad.

*Glo.* 'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind;  
Do as I bid thee.

*Old Man.* I 'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,  
Come on 't what will.

*Glo.* Sirrah, naked fellow.

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a-cold; I cannot fool it longer; [Aside.  
And yet I must.—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed;  
Believe 't, poor Tom ev'n weeps his blind to see 'em.

*Glo.* Knows't thou the way to Dover?

*Edg.* Both stile and gate, horseway and footpath.  
Poor Tom has been scared out of his good wits. Bless  
Every true man's son from the foul fiend.

*Glo.* Here, take this purse; that I am wretched  
Makes thee the happier. Heav'n deal so still!  
Thus let the griping usurer's hoard be scatter'd,  
So distribution shall undo excess,  
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover?

*Edg.* Ay, master.



A mistresses command. Weare this ; spare speech ;  
Decline your head. This kisse, if it durst speake,  
Would stretch thy spirits up into the ayre :  
Conceive, and fare the well.

*Edm.* Yours in the rankes of death.

[*Exit.*

*Gon.* My most deare Glos'ter.

Oh the strange difference of man, and man,  
To thee a woman's services are due,  
My foole usurpes my body.

---

Then came the days of the Siddons. Shakespeare was appreciated then. We have all heard our fathers or grandfathers talk of John Philip Kemble, and how great he was in Hamlet and Coriolanus. Remembering, as we do, the reading that was appreciated in the desk, and the oratory that was popular in the pulpit, in our boyhood's days, we doubt if John Kemble would be greatly approved at the present time. John Philip Kemble was esteemed a great actor, a scholar, and a gentleman.

Young was the great tragedian of our early days. Edmund Kean was a fine impersonator of certain characters ; but Young's reading, elocution, dress, and deportment, was much more finished and refined. Charles Kemble, in light comedy, was clever ; he dressed as well as the Charles Mathews

*Glo.* There is a cliff, whose high and bending head  
Looks dreadfully down on the roaring deep;  
Bring me but to the very brink of it,  
And I'll repair the poverty thou bear'st  
With something rich about me. From that place  
I shall no leading need.

*Edg.* Give me thy arm? poor Tom shall guide thee.

*Glo.* Soft, for I hear the tread of passengers.

*Enter KENT in his own character, and CORDELIA, L. H.*

---

of the present day; but he could never forget that he was a handsome man, and a favourite with the ladies. When his daughter Fanny played *Belvidera*, in *Venice Preserved*, he took the part of Pierre. Pierre had never been such a gay gallant soldier before. He played the character well though. Young had often performed it; and when he came to the line

Curse on this weakness, [Weeps.

the refined and elegant Young used (we can't find a better expression) to grub the tear out with his knuckle. Try the action, reader, and you will *feel* its appropriateness. Charles Kemble, at the same passage, drew out a cambric handkerchief, and with an appropriate flourish, like the soldier in the song who leant upon his sword, "he wiped away a tear."

The several actions were characteristic of the two men.

We will admit that John Philip Kemble was a great actor, attaching our own meaning to that word. The characters of a scholar and a gentleman we cannot award him, at present. He, like Nahum Tate, had heard that a man called Shakespeare had made a thing called the *Tempest*, and he compiled a play out of it. It is called

THE TEMPEST;  
OR  
THE ENCHANTED ISLAND,  
WRITTEN  
BY SHAKESPEARE.  
WITH ADDITIONS FROM DRYDEN,  
AS COMPILED, BY  
J. P. KEMBLE,  
AND FIRST ACTED AT THE  
THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,  
OCTOBER 13TH, 1789.

LONDON:—

Printed for J. Debrett, opposite Burlington  
House, Piccadilly.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.

We have extracted a scene or two :—

*Act V. Scene 1.—A Wood.*

*Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA.*

*Pros.* You beg in vain ; I cannot pardon him,  
He has offended Heaven.

*Mir.* Then let Heav'n punish him.

*Pros.* It will, by me.

*Mir.* Grant him at least some respite for my sake.

*Pros.* I by deferring justice should incense  
The Deity against myself and you.

*Mir.* Yet I have heard you say the pow'rs above  
Are slow in punishing, and should not you  
Resemble them ?

And can you be his judge and executioner.

*Pros.* I cannot force Gonzalo, or my brother,  
Much less the father to destroy the son ;  
It must be then the monster Caliban,  
And he's not here ; but Ariel straight shall fetch him.

*Enter ARIEL.*

*Ariel.* My potent lord, before thou call'st I come  
To serve thy will.

*Pros.* Then, spirit, fetch me here my savage slave.

*Ariel.* My lord, it does not need.

*Pros.* Art thou then prone to mischief, wilt thou be  
Thyself the executioner ?

*Ariel.* Think better of thy airy minister,  
Who, for thy sake, unbidden, this night has flown  
O'er almost all the habitable world.

*Pros.* But to what purpose was thy diligence ?

*Ariel.* When I was chidden by my mighty lord  
For my neglect of young Hippolito,  
I went to view his body, and soon found  
His soul was but retir'd, not sally'd out :  
Then I collected

The best of simples underneath the moon,  
 The best of balms, and to the wound apply'd  
 The healing juice of vulnerary herbs.  
 His only danger was his loss of blood ;  
 But now he's wak'd, my lord, and just this hour  
 He must be dress'd again, as I have done it.  
 Anoint the sword which pierc'd him, with his weapon-  
 Salve, and wrap it close from air, till I have time to visit him again.

*Pros.* Thou art my faithful servant,  
 It shall be done ; be it your task, Miranda,  
 Because your sister is not present here ;  
 While I go visit your dear Ferdinand,  
 From whom I will a while conceal this news,  
 That it may be more welcome.

*Mir.* I obey you,  
 And with a double duty, sir ; for now  
 You twice have given me life. [*Exit.*

*Pros.* Now haste, untie the spell, and to me bring  
 The wretched Caliban, and his companions. [*Exeunt severally.*

*Act V. Scene 2.—A Cave.*

HIPPOLITO discovered on a couch, DORINDA by him.

*Dor.* How do you find yourself?

*Hip.* I'm somewhat cold,

Can you not draw me nearer to the sun?

I am too weak to walk.

*Dor.* My love, I'll try.

I thought you never would have walk'd again ;

They told me you were gone away to heaven ;

Have you been there?

*Hip.* I know not where I was.

*Dor.* I will not leave you till you promise me  
 You will not die again.

*Hip.* Indeed I will not.

*Dor.* You must not go to heaven, unless we go together ;  
 But much I wonder what it is to die.

*Hip.* Sure 'tis to dream a sort of breathless sleep,  
When once the soul's gone out.

*Dor.* What is the soul?

*Hip.* A small blue thing that runs about within us.

*Dor.* Then I have seen it of a frosty morning  
Run smoaking from my mouth.

*Hip.* But, dear Dorinda,  
What is become of him who fought with me?

*Dor.* Oh! I can tell you joyful news of him :  
My father means to make him die to-day,  
For what he did to you.

*Hip.* That must not be,  
My dear Dorinda, go and beg your father  
He may not die; it was my fault he hurt me,  
I urg'd him to it first.

*Dor.* But if he live, he'll ne'er leave killing you.

*Hip.* My dear, go quickly, lest you come too late.

[*Exit Dorinda.*]

John Philip Kemble *possibly* was a scholar and a gentleman—but he did not behave like a gentleman to Shakespeare, and he was *not* a Shakesperian scholar.

At the end of the *Taming of the Shrew*, Johnson remarks :—"From this play *The Tatler* formed a story," vol. iv. No. 131. After narrating the story as it appears in the *Tatler*, he adds :—"It cannot but seem strange that Shakespeare should be so little known to the author of the *Tatler*, that he should suffer the Story to be obtruded upon him, or so little known to the publick, that he should

hope to make it pass upon his readers as a novel narrative of a transaction in Lincolnshire ; yet it is apparent that he was deceived, or intended to deceive, that he knew not himself whence the story was taken, or hoped he might rob so obscure a writer without detection.”

We might multiply instances proving how this author has been travestied or ignored by those who profess to idolise him. But having shown how the great poet Tate, the great actor Kemble, and the great essayist Steele, treated him,—we may well leave it to the reader to conclude how he has been used by lesser men.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### AN EPITOME OF WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

It would be a new, though certainly a very promising feature in Shakesperian inquiry and discussion, that the evidence adduced should be required to have some little bearing upon the point sought to be established.

Critics have debated the period at which Shakespeare left school, without stopping to inquire when he went there: the *existence* of a free school at Stratford being abundant proof that he must have been a scholar at it; the existence of a hostelrie at Stratford, would be as good proof that he was a drunkard.

The lines,

There's a divinity doth shape our ends,  
Rough hew them as we will,

because *skewers* are made of *rough* wood, and *shaped* or pointed *at the ends*, are assumed to prove that Shakespeare's father was a butcher.

His journeys to Italy and Scotland are supported by evidence of a similar kind.

And Mr. Charles Butler claims him as an eminent Roman Catholic upon negative evidence, which would just as well entitle him to be considered a Mahometan; therefore it is not for editors, critics, and commentators who are versed in Shakesperian lore, to object that the evidence is not conclusive, or the argument not logical.

Not being worst,  
Stands in some rank of praise;

With such desultory discourse, volumes might be filled; and it would be agreeable to our humour so to do, for it is a subject upon which we love to dilate. We must, however, put some restriction upon ourselves, out of regard to our readers. And supposing them to have arrived at this point, we will make a little chart of the wilderness which they have passed through, and what we wished them to learn in their wanderings.

Had we accompanied them, we should have pointed out, that very little indeed is known of the History of Shakespeare, and that that little in no way connects him with these Plays—that the writer of them must have possessed a vast variety of talents, such as have been reported to have

been found in Francis Bacon, and in him alone; that the wit and poetry are of a kind which was peculiarly his—that William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon connected himself with a class which had only recently sprung into existence, and which were held in the utmost contempt—that he was neither eminent as an actor, nor as a writer, during his lifetime, nor celebrated as such in the period immediately succeeding his death—that there are some remarkable coincidences of expression in these plays and in the writings of Bacon, and that the latter was ever careful to note anything like a quotation—that the theatre with which Shakespeare was connected was the Public Theatre—the lowest place at which dramatic entertainments were then represented—that literary labour was not at that time ordinarily pursued for pecuniary recompense, and the few that followed such an occupation were regarded with the utmost contempt—that a play was hardly considered a literary work, and ranked infinitely below a sonnet, and that learned men would as little have prided themselves upon writing one, as upon uttering a *bon mot*—that the first collection of plays that assumed anything like the appearance of a literary work was Ben Jonson's splendid folio—that it was

after this was published that he became acquainted with Bacon, and probably with the plays, many of which certainly never were published, if in any other way ever heard of, before the publication of the folio of 1623—that after that they did not become popular as plays, and had a very limited circulation—that they were hardly known at the time of the Restoration, and so little appreciated, that the most ignorant considered themselves able to improve them—that they have become generally popular through actors delineating characters, and delivering speeches, which were either not written, or not so appropriated by the poet ; whilst his true admirers have ever been, and are still, that,—at one time small, but rapidly increasing,—portion of the community, the reading public ; these admire him for beauties quite independent of the boards, and which shine forth, in spite of the ill usage which the book has been subject to.

What with alterations of the text, perplexing notes, and injudicious commentaries, we safely assert, that with the exception (possibly) of Théobald's, no edition of the Shakespeare Plays has been published, from that of Rowe down to the beginning of the present century, that can at all be relied on. We say nothing of editions pub-

lished by living authors; yet we cannot refrain from remarking, that in this present year (1857) a learned man, not content with weakening passages by altering words, has changed the very form of the dialogue, and turned the nervous and expressive lines addressed by Cassius to Casca, amidst the thunder and lightning, in the first act of *Julius Cæsar*,—

You are dull, Casca :  
And those sparkes of life, that should be in a Roman,  
You doe want, or else you use not.  
You looke pale, and gaze, and put on feare,  
And cast yourself in wonder,  
To see the strange impatience of the heavens,—

into

You are dull, Casca ; and those sparks of life  
That should be in a Roman you do want,  
Or else you use not. You look pale, and gaze,  
And put on fear, and cast yourself in wonder,  
To see the strange impatience of the heavens :

and he prides himself upon improving the poetry of the Dramatist. A Baden bath towel might probably be ironed as smooth as a cambric kerchief, and look all the neater for the process, but it would thereby lose both its character and its peculiar excellence.

His Bible and his Shakespeare are books Protestant Englishmen pride themselves upon possess-

ing, and profess to peruse. Parts of each are periodically brought under notice, and so incorporated in ordinary conversation, that without much reading a man must know something of them, and without much cunning, "may seem to know that he doth not." Yet how few can conscientiously say of either the one or the other, that "he has read it right through." How few, whilst reading their editions, are aware of the vast difference betwixt them and "what he hath left us." The Bible was long locked up in an unknown tongue, and only known through the commentaries of the priests; the Shakespeare Plays are similarly locked up in almost inaccessible libraries, and similarly made known. The traditions of the Church of Rome are hardly less true to the former, than is the text of those self-constituted priests to the latter. Surely it is time that the laity should possess this volume in its integrity.

And here let me notice a belief that is growing very general amongst Shakesperian students, in which we are much disposed to concur. It is urged on one side, that the folio editions are so faulty and full of errors, textual and typographical, that it is free to any one to make them just what he pleases. It is urged, on the other hand, that

“as a typographical production, it is better executed than the common run of English popular printing of that date.” The opinion that is gaining ground is, that the several volumes of the same edition vary, parts and passages having been altered as the printing proceeded. This would be an interesting subject to investigate, but would involve the necessity of looking out for the most incorrect as well as the most perfected copy. But certainly something would be gained if Shakespearians could be brought to agree upon any one point.

We may here mention a fact which we have remarked, and have not seen noted by any commentator—that every page in each of the three first folio editions contains exactly the same amount of matter;—the same word which begins or ends the page in the 1623 edition, begins and ends the page in the 1632 and 1664 editions: proving that they were printed from one author, if not from the same types. The 1685 edition is altogether different.

Some things that we have written will doubtless be attempted to be disproved, many will be distorted; and we shall be told that the sum of the whole does not prove that Bacon wrote the plays



attributed to Shakespeare. We have never said or insinuated that we hoped or expected to prove any such a thing. All we say is, that for 150 years an arduous investigation has been carried on in a clean contrary direction. Is it worth while to pursue it for 150 days, for 150 hours, in this? We repeat what we wrote in an early page: "We do but hope to adduce such evidence as may induce some active inquiry in this direction."

And what is the use?

Let Bacon answer:—

"The inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it; the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it; the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it—IS THE SOVEREIGN GOOD OF HUMAN NATURE."

But what is the practical use?

Let Schlegel answer:—"The admiration of Shakespeare remained unproductive for dramatic poetry. Because he has been so much the object of astonishment, as an unapproachable genius, who owed everything to nature and nothing to art. His success, it is thought, is without example, and can never be repeated; nay, it is even forbidden to enter into the same region. Had he been considered more from an artistic point of view, it

would have led to an endeavour to understand the principles which he followed in his practice, and an attempt to master them. A meteor appears, disappears, and leaves no trace behind; the course of a heavenly body ought however to be delineated by the astronomer, for the sake of investigating more accurately the laws of general mechanics."

"Whatever is done," says Bacon, "by virtue and industry, seems to be done by a kind of habit and art, and therefore open to be imitated and followed; whereas felicity is inimitable."

Hence men have been deterred from attempting, by "virtue and industry," to compete with that "felicity" which they believe to be "inimitable."

This we note to be an evil.

If, however, it should be proved that these plays were written by Bacon, it would be inferred that this branch of literature does not so much require skill and practice in that part of poetry which, as Bacon says, "respects words, and is but as a character of stile," as extensive and varied knowledge, feeling, reflection, and experience, which form the poetic mind.

And when we consider how ready and powerful a medium of communicating and diffusing knowledge the stage is, or might be, if it should appear

that the statesman, the philosopher, and the man of the world, are the best qualified contributors to it; how many rich thoughts and wise reflections—which perhaps, after encumbering portfolios for a time, have been consigned to the waste-paper basket, may in future be worked up into a play—and thus embalmed for the use and delight of future ages.

Reader—*au revoir*.

Go, little Book—our name is of no note—our recommendation will be of no use to you;—do good service to us and our publisher, and we will reward you with a red coat with gold facings, and a portrait of the author. By that time our Government, which loves to reward literary labour, will have made us “Baron Bacon,”—and we will issue a new edition, with a coronet in the corner of each leaf—for the American market—where lords are lauded.

Go, little Book;—weak natures must have recourse to cunning: success salves every sin; we would not have you savour of a lie, much less be detected in one.

You must not say that you came out from the Egyptian Hall; but you may insinuate that you were written by

A—— SMITH.



# APPENDIX.

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## A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF A CURIOUS MANUSCRIPT

In the Collection of the Rev. Dr. NELIGAN, with Extracts.

THE MANUSCRIPT IS ENTITLED  
A TRUE HISTORICALL RELATION  
OF THE CONVERSION OF  
SIR TOBIE MATTHEWS\*

TO THE HOLIE CATHOLIC FAYTH,  
With the Antecedents and Consequents thereof,  
*To a deare Friend.*

---

THIS highly curious Manuscript consists of three separate treatises, and is dated 8th 7ber, 1640.† It is signed by Sir Tobie Matthew himself in two places, viz., at the end of the history of his conversion, where it also bears the name of several witnesses in their own autographs; and again after the treatise called *Posthumus, or the Survivour*, to which Sir T. Matthew has likewise affixed his seal in red wax. In its very interesting pages will be found the following:—

Page 2—Resolves to spend some years in Italy.

3—Prays his parents “to give me leave to spend some six months in France till the Parlement in England (wherein I had a place) should be recontinued.”

4—Charged by his father (the then Archbishop of York) not to go into Spain or Italy—promises that he “would walk within the limit which his father prescribed.”

\* The name is in the autograph of Sir T. M., who was the eldest son of Dr. Tobias Matthew, Archbishop of York A.D. 1606—1627.

† Although dated 1640, it refers to occurrences prior to that period.

- Page 5—Has “been of opinion that his father thought him likeliest enough to lay hold upon Catholick religion, if he should once find himself in a place where it was punctually professed and practised.”
- 6—Sir T. Matthew leaves England and goes into Italy.
- 12—Walks with Sir George Petre and Mr. Robert Cansfield.
- 15, 16—Apparent “liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius,” which it is pretended, was before as “hard as a pumice-stone,” witnessed by the Earl of Suffolk, who relates it as true.
- 20, 21—On the — of October, 1605, falls with his mule over a bridge into a river near Naples—“one of his spurs broken, but his body being made of a softer metal,” is miraculously preserved—meets the “Bishop of Malta, and divers Cavaliers of that Order.”
- 26—Arrival at Rome, and introduction to the celebrated Jesuit Father Persons, or Parsons, with whom he has many conferences.
- 34—Introduction to, and conference with, Cardinal Pinelli relative to Queen Mary, Elizabeth, &c.
- 64—Libraries of St. Mark and St. Lawrence, in Florence.
- 77—“Purposed fully to become a Roman Catholic.”
- 79—Fancies that he “was not as he then was in Florence, but in London and in Prison,” and that he “may be carried to Tyburne, there to suffer death for the confession and Profession of his Faith.”
- 80—Allusion to the “Gunpowder Treason.”
- 89—Waits on Padre Lelio Ptolomei.
- 93—“Conducted to the Inquisitor,” by whom he is “absolved” from what he terms “all his heresies”—received into the Church of Rome, in the Annunciata at Florence.
- 96, 97—Returns to England—visits Canterburie, the “Chayre of St. Thomas” (à Becket)—his prayer there.
- 100 to 103—Takes lodgings at the east end of London—confers with, and writes to, the celebrated Sir Francis Bacon, “changes his lodgings into Fleet Street.”
- 104—A visit to Dr. Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury—various conferences with him in the Pages following.
- 115—Description of Bancroft’s Library, “the most excellent possessed by any one single subject in the world,”—the reason of this.



- Page 116—Bancroft calls for his "Secretary and commanded him to make out a warrant for his commitment" to prison.
- 119, 120—Extraordinary copious draught of Archbishop Bancroft, on the festival of SS. Peter and Paul, "of a huge goblet or bowle of about a quart (one of those which kings give to archbishops for their New Year's Guift—of what was neither beere, nor wine, nor ale, but a caudle, which shewed nutmegs and eggs,"—the description of this scene is very amusing.
- 123—The Archbishop sends for Sir Christopher Perkins to confer with Sir Toby Matthew.
- 131—"His Majestie one day asking the Bishop (Bancroft) what became of me," he answered that he held me for a kind of obstinate man—"whereupon the King was pleased to directe him to put to me the oath with opinion, that by no means I would refuse it.
- 132—"Mr. Blackwell the arche-prieste taken" for refusing the oath of allegiance, "and put out of his witts" by "these subtill men of state"—It appears from page 198, that Mr. Blackwell was in the Clink Prison or Precincts.
- 143—Sir T. M. committed to the Fleete Prison by the Archbishop.
- 144, 145—Visited by Sir Christopher Perkins and Doctour Morton,\* "who was made a bishop afterwards," "much abused by his ill reports," Sir T. M. speaks to him of the "falsifications with which Fa. Persons had charged him with, and so he grew to trouble me no more"—"tormented much by Doctour Evansham."
- 146—Visited in the Prison by Sir Maurice Barkley, Sir Edwin Sandes, Sir Henry Goodyear, Mr. Richard Martin, Mr. John Dunne, &c.
- 151—Visited by Dr. Albericus Gentilis "the Doctour of the Chayre in Oxford for Civil Law."
- 158, 189—Long controversial discussion with Dr. Andrews, Bishop of Chichester, occupying several pages.
- 168, 169—Dr. Fulke, &c.

\* Perhaps Dr. Thomas Morton, Bishop of Chester, A.D. 1616, translated to Litchfield, 1618—Durham, 1632.

- Page 189—"The Plague was then hott in London, and yet it was in no power of mine to get released from that prison."
- 190—Sir Francis Bacon intercedes for him.
- 193, 194—Offers to make a present to the Bishop of Salisburie, who declines accepting it without paying the full value.
- 196—Sir George Calvert, Sir John Dackombe, &c.
- 204—Disposes of his estate.
- 205—"Delivered out of the Fleete" Prison.—"My Lo. of Salisburie kept a continual watch upon me, to do me all honour."
- 206—Goes into France—makes "an acquaintance with Mr. Villiers, who grew afterwards to be the King's favourite and Duke of Buckingham."
- 207, 208—who "resolved to press King James to permitt me to returne into my countrie, to which, after great difficulties, his Majestie was content to give way," thinking that he would take the oath of allegiance, which he still refused, "though with good manners"—the King takes offence at his refusal.  
 "My Lo. of Bristol had so much good will and so much power as to obtain my return home."
- 208—"King James was pleased to put a visible marke of particular honour upon me, at the instance of his Majestie that now is," viz., Charles I., then Prince of Wales.—His conference with the King—"King James spoke very graciously to me."
- 209—"Upon this the honours and favours done me at Court, in the eye as it were of my parents, made them grow apace in being good to me."—"Being once at my father's house, it came out that there came by accident, if not by designe, a kinde of lustie knott, if it might not rather goe for a little colledge of certaine eminent Clergie-men, Archdeacons, Doctors, and Chaplains, &c. &c."—with these he enters into a Controversial Discussion, which occupies several pages, and after expressing his opinions, he says:—
- 215—"It was strange to see how they wrung their hands, and their whites of eyes were turned up, and their devout sighes were sent abroad to testifie their grief that I would utter myself after that manner."

Page 220—"My father would ever choose to put some fitt booke into my hand, than to enter into anie express discourse, though he told me what a crosse and disadvantage it was to him that I should be of that religion which I professed, and what a comfort it would be if I returned to his; my custom was to excuse myself," &c.

222—Thinks his father was inclined to embrace his believe.

223—Death of his father "a matter of much grief to my hart."

223, 232—Interesting allusion to his "Mother, who was much more fervent towards the Puritanicall Scripture way."

225—His mother "went out of this world, calling for her silkes and toys and trinketts, more like an ignorant childe of foure years old, than like a talking Scripturist of almost foure score."

226—End of "historicall part."

232—Conclusion of first treatise.

The following is in his own autograph, on page 232 :—

"I take God humbly to  
wittness yt all this relation  
aforesaid is intirely true.

"TOBIE MATTHEW.

"London, ye 8th of  
7ber, 1640."

Then follows the attestation by witnesses, in a different writing, and their autograph signatures :—

"We heer underwritten affirme that wee have heard Sir Toby Matthew declare, and take it upon his soule, that both the Relation of his Conversion, which is seen sett down in this booke; and also the following short Discourse, which he calls by the name of *Posthumus, or the Survivour*, are entyrelly true, to the best of his understanding and memory. Both which are signed by his owne hand. He also holds the following Five-and-twenty Considerations, in order to religion to be very considerable and sweet.

"Elizabeth Mordaunt.

"Anne Mordaunt.	Elizabeth Petre.
George Wintour.	Ffran. Petre.
Edward Gulyard.	Edward Young."
Edward Guldeforde.	
Thos. James.	

Some of the above autographs are fine specimens of the writing of the period.

We are then presented with *Posthumus, or the Survivour*, a treatise which occupies twenty-one pages; and from page 22 to the end, page 59, we have the "Five-and-twenty Considerations" alluded to, dated 1641, and apparently "signed, James Louth." At the end of *Posthumus, or the Survivour*, is the following, in the autograph of Sir Toby Matthew, and an impression of his seal in red wax:—

"Signed by me in London, as in  
ye presence of Almighty God, for  
most certainly and intirely  
true; upon ye 8th day of 7ber.  
1640.

"TOBIE MATTHEW."



The seal bears a Lion Rampant in the first and fourth quarters, and *three* Chevrons in the second and third.

N.B.—These extracts were selected hastily and at random, and convey only a very imperfect idea of this curious manuscript, containing, as it does, a great variety of entertaining conferences, with parties well known in the history of the time, with several interesting historical facts, anecdotes, &c. &c.

It is in fine preservation, being as fresh and clean as when first written, and was for many years in the possession of a highly respectable Roman Catholic family in Cork, being, as is supposed, a sort of heirloom in the family.

The MS. was most probably written by some amanuensis or secretary, but whenever the name of Sir T. M. occurs it is in his own autograph, except in the above attestation. Sir Toby Matthew was the author of some works mentioned by Lowndes, who tells us that "an account of him will be found in Wood's *Athen. Oxon.*," and that "several of his letters are in the *Cabala* and the *Scrinia Sacra*."—*Vide Lowndes' Bibliographer's Manual*, p. 1238.

Sir Tobie Matthew was well known in the literary, political, and so-called religious world, and was, as before stated, the eldest son of Dr. T. Matthew, Archbishop of York.

Since the foregoing was in type, the following has been extracted from a fine copy of Wood's *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, kindly lent from the valuable and extensive library of the Ven. S. M. Kyle, LL.D., Archdeacon of Cork:—

"Tobie Matthew, the eldest son of Dr. Tobie Matthew, Archbishop of York, by Frances his wife, daughter of William Barlow, some time Bishop of Chichester, was born in Oxon, and matriculated there in 1589. He became a noted orator and disputant, and taking his degree in Arts, travelled into various countries. At his return he was taken into the acquaintance of Sir Francis Bacon, and between them there passed divers letters, which, if collected, might make a pretty volume. At length leaving the Church of England by the persuasion of Father Parsons,\* the Jesuit, he entered into the society, but whether he took orders, is to me yet uncertain. Afterwards growing famous for his eminency in politics, he came into England upon invitation, and on the 10th Oct., 1623, received the honour of knighthood from his Majestie,† for his great zeal in carrying on the Spanish match to be had with Prince Charles. At which time not only the King, but the chief of his nobility and others at Court, had a high value for him—he was also highly valued by the Earl of Strafford, with

\* See his conferences with Father Parsons, page 26, &c.

† This must be what he meant by saying, page 208—"King James was pleased to put a visible marke of particular honour upon me."

whom he went into Ireland, that his advice and counsel might be used. He was greatly hated by the Presbyterians, and more especially by Prynne, who said that he was sent into England by Pope Urban VIII., with whom he was in much esteem, to reconcile England to the Church of Rome, in which work he, as they further say, received a pension\* from Cardinal Barberini, &c. &c. &c."

Then follows a list of his works, amongst which was one in praise of Lucy Countess of Carlisle, for which Sir John Suckling brought him into the poem called the *Session or Court of Poets*, thus:—

"Toby Matthews ——— what made him there?  
Was whispering nothing in somebody's ear,  
When he had the honour to be named in Court,  
But, Sir, you may thank my Lady Carleil for't."

He concluded his last day at Gaunt, in Flanders, on the 13th Oct., 1655. On his coffin was a leaden plate, with this written thereon: "*Hic jacet D. Tobias Matthew.*"

*Wood's Athen. Oxon.*, 1721, vol. ii. pages 194, 195.

\* This he most strenuously denies in page 8, of *Posthumous*, stating, "I never knew anie one in my whole life who lived in obedience under this Crowne, who received pension or profit from anie foreign Prince in the world. And let God be good to my soul when I shall dye, as he knows I speak nothing but truth."

THE END.

Copy.

St. Louis Mo. U.S.A  
May 27<sup>th</sup> 1867.

Dear Sir,

Knowing the interest  
you take in whatever concerns  
the authorship of the Shakespeare  
Plays, and believing now that  
you were the first convert to  
the Baconian Theory, though I  
was not aware of the fact until  
lately, I have thought a copy  
of my work on that subject  
might be acceptable to you, and  
send you one herewith through  
the Smithsonian Institution.

I received lately, together  
with a little book of M<sup>r</sup>. James



Spedding, from the house of  
John Russel Smith, 36 Soho  
Square, a copy of your "Letter  
to Lord Ellesmere" and "Bacon &  
Shakespeare" (London 1857) —  
neither of which I had seen  
though I was informed of the  
"Letter" before my book was finished.

Both are very interesting to me,  
and especially the latter, not  
only as taking the same general  
view of this authorship, but  
particularly as citing a passage  
from Sir Toby Matthew's Letters,  
concerning the mental qualities  
and individual character of  
Lord Bacon, which I very  
much regret I did not have

an opportunity of making use of. It is a very significant fact. Your arguments and suggestions are exceedingly happy and — stated with great force — You say it has been your belief for 20 years — I believe you may take it for a fact once for all, and for ever.

It is probable that your conclusions were as much unknown to Miss Bacon as they were to me, while her studies were going on. I regret that I did not know of your prior claims to be the first discoverer of this extraordinary revelation that

I might have given you  
due credit in my Preface -  
My aim was to marshall  
the evidence and expound  
Bacon's philosophy, and a  
little of my own, for which  
an American critic suggests,  
not without some justice,  
that neither Bacon nor  
Shakespeare ought to be held  
responsible. Please excuse  
the liberty I have taken with  
one who is a stranger to me  
personally, otherwise than as all  
who are in search after truth  
may be regarded as friends and  
believe me with high regard

Yours truly

(Signed) Nath<sup>l</sup>. Holmes

To  
W<sup>m</sup> Henry Smith Esq<sup>r</sup>



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